ANIMATION WORLD

September 1997 • MAGAZINE • Vol. 2 No.6

Here Comes Television

Fall TV Preview

France's Expanding Channels

SIGGRAPH Review

Korea's Boom

Dinner with MTV's Abby Terkuhle and CTW's Arlene Sherman

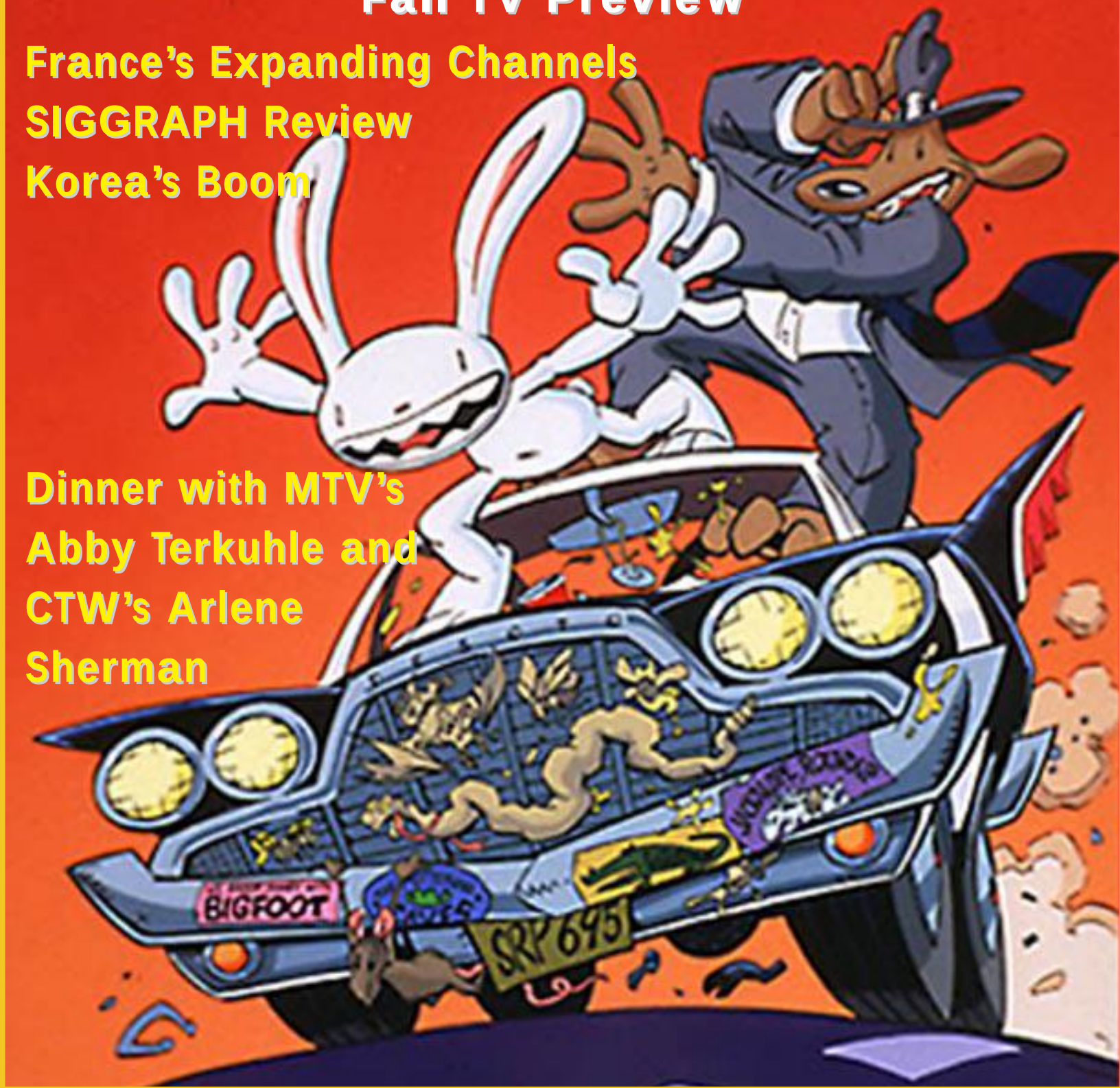

Table of Contents

September 1997 **Vol. 2, . No. 6**

September 1997

4 **Editor's Notebook**
Aah, television, our old friend. What madness the power of a child with a remote control instills in us...

6 **Letters: editor@awn.com**

TELEVISION

8 **A Conversation With: Arlene Sherman and Abby Terkuhle**
Mo Willems hosts a conversation over dinner with CTW's Arlene Sherman and MTV's Abby Terkuhle. What does this unlikely duo have in common? More than you would think!

15 **CTW and MTV: Shorts of Influence**
The impact that CTW and MTV has had on one another, the industry and beyond is the subject of Chris Robinson's in-depth investigation.

21 **Tooning in the Fall Season**
A new splash of fresh programming is soon to hit the airwaves. In this pivotal year of FCC rulings and vertical integration, let's see what has been produced.

26 **Saturday Morning Bonanza: The New Crop for the Kiddies**
The incurable, couch potato Martha Day decides what she's going to watch on Saturday mornings in the U.S.

29 **Mushrooms After the Rain: France's Children's Channels**
As a crop of new children's channels springs up in France, Marie-Agnès Bruneau depicts the new players, in both the satellite and cable arenas, during these tumultuous times. A fierce competition is about to begin...

33 **The Korean Animation Explosion**
Milt Vallas reports on Korea's growth from humble beginnings to big business. This Asian dynamo is striving to be taken seriously by the international animation community.

39 **The Cost of Eyeballs: Advertising Dollars & TV**
Buzz Potamkin takes a long look at the relationship between on-air advertising and television animation. As ratings become diluted across the channels, where does the future lie?

42 **Joanna Priestley: A Continuing Dialogue**
Rose Bond interviews Joanna Priestley and reveals the unique relationship between the filmmaker and her films.

45 **Charlie Thorson: Character Design In Classic Animation**
Gene Walz chronicles the mysterious career of Charlie Thorson, a crucial character designer who was quite a character himself.

THE STUDENT CORNER

48 **The Television Animation Portfolio: A Model**
So, you want to work for a large television studio? Veteran television producer Larry Huber describes what you had better show him in order to get a job.

REVIEWS

FESTIVALS, EVENTS:

51 **SIGGRAPH '97: Too Much to Do, See and Think in a Week**
Our SIGGRAPH review includes: a review of the Electronic Theater by Avi Hoffer **(p.52)**; *news of the week's most important announcements* **(p.55)**; *an industry survey* **(p.60)**

62 **San Diego's Comic Con: The King of All Cons**
The title says it all! Scott Brick reviews the world's largest comic book expo.

65 **Masters Of Animation: An Unprecedented Opportunity**
Seattle's first animation festival gets a glowing review by Doug Ranney. His tales of hobnobbing with animation's biggest stars in a casual setting are sure to make you green with envy.

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Table of Contents

September 1997 **Vol. 2, . No. 6**

September 1997

68 **AnimExpo'97: An Introduction to the Rising Tiger**
Korea's AnimExpo is reviewed by Detelina Kreck who reveals a thriving, lively community.

HIDDEN TREASURES

70 **Animation in the NFTVA**
This month we are defining the collection at The National Film & Television Archive in the United Kingdom. Founded in 1936, the NFTVA has an expansive collection of British animation available for investigation.

NEWS

72 **Animation World News**
Good-Bye Springfield....Hello Nevada?, Disney Quests For Gaming Market, WB Turns Iron Giant Green.

ON A DESERT ISLAND...

82 **On A Desert Island With . . . TV Visionaries**
Martin Lickleder, Steve Purcell, Enzo d'Alo, Trey Parker and Matt Stone reveal their top ten films.

AWN COMICS

84 **Dirdy Birdy** *by John Dilworth, as seen on MTV's Cartoon Sushi!*

85 **Next Issue's Highlights**

Cover: *Sam and Max. © 1997 Nelvana.*

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Bonus HTML Features

Every online (HTML) issue of *Animation World Magazine* contains additional features not found in the download or print Acrobat version, such as Quicktime movies, links to Animation World Network sites, extended articles and special sections. Don't miss the following highlights that are showcased exclusively in this month's *Animation World Magazine* HTML version:

http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.5/awm2.5pages/2.5cover.html

- **What's On? TV Schedules From Around the World**
  Wondering what animated shows are being watched in Brazil? Germany? And More? This compilation will take you on a mini-tour around the world. Who knows, maybe they are watching what you are.
- **The Television Animation Portfolio: A Model**
  More sample portfolio drawings are included.
- **A Gallery of SIGGRAPH '97s Computer Animation Festival**
  We are pleased to present a sampling of images, Quicktime movies, and notes from 33 of the films presented at SIGGRAPH's Electronic Theater. In addition, Avi Hoffer's review of The Electronic Theater includes three Quicktime movies illustrating the author's selections.
- **Dirdy Birdy** by John Dilworth features a streaming audio soundtrack in the online verision.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

by Heather Kenyon

Television: Our Friend, Our Milk and Bread

When we think of animation most of us think of Saturday morning first and foremost...television cartoons. Television has a voracious appetite for animation and it's predominately all to entertain the lucrative children's market. This issue focuses on just a few of the many facets of television animation.

Television is our friend. It is that bright and shiny box that brings fun and information into our homes. Because it's a guest in our house we expect it to be bright, polite and non-offending. The United States Federal Communications Commission has recently passed laws encouraging U.S. networks to host more educational programming. "What's On? TV Schedules From Around the World" (HTML format only) shows that this will influence the world, not just the U.S. due to aggressive international sales. There are potential substantial changes that the FCC ruling could bring to the U.S. market. Viewers are already migrating toward cable in record numbers. With a ramping up of educational shows on networks, it's hard to know if even more viewers will turn to cable for the cutting-edge, instead of the soft-edge. At the same time, the worldwide market place is becoming more competitive as well. Europe is a lively market that is producing first-class animated entertainment. Australia is struggling to find enough animators to handle their new crop of animated programs and as Detelina Kreck's "AnimExpo'97: An Introduction to the Rising Tiger" review and Milt Vallas' "The Korean Animation Explosion" indicate, Korea is eager to enter the market with its own creative product. If we were to do "What's On? TV Schedules From Around the World" in the future, will we see less U.S. programming?

No matter how much the

animation industry rushes around trying to make the best possible of all children's shows, it all boils down to a child with the power to choose. For the most part, they don't care which shows will be canceled because they aren't watching them, or who will lose their job as a result. They also aren't concerned about the fact that the show has been in development for a year with only the top professionals, or that the producers banded together a group of the most respected studios in order to make a show. They don't care which government quotas are being fulfilled or who made the sale of the programming to the network, cable or satellite distribution mechanism. They don't care about the artist who went to school for years and they probably don't even think about the person who put down the cable or launched the satellite into orbit. Thousands, upon thousands of people are employed to get television shows on the air, with the toys in the stores at the same time. However, it all still revolves around a child and what makes him or her giggle. What a mad, mad business! It is such an expansive business that involves, big, big money and yet, there is absolutely no science to what will make a child laugh whatsoever.

Our issue reveals the new shows that studios and networks are rolling the dice on this season as well as the influence that MTV and CTW has had on the animation community, its audience and even the world of animation festivals and advertising. Mo Willems hosted "A Conversation With: Arlene Sherman and Abby Terkuhle" one evening in New York and spoke to the heads of these groundbreaking studios. We are also looking into France's proliferation of channels in "Mushrooms After the Rain: France's Children's Channels" that also includes a short description of the CSA, the French Audiovisual Council, which governs French programming.

In our Reviews section we are also reviewing "San Diego's Comic Con: The King of All Cons," Seattle's "Masters Of Animation: An Unprecedented Opportunity," and, of course, "SIGGRAPH '97: Too Much to Do, See and Think in a

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Week." Our SIGGRAPH review includes an online version of the Computer Animation Festival, complete with Quicktime clips and much, much more. SIGGRAPH is a fascinating experience that is half about today's innovations and half about the future. It is unlike any normal trade show in that, while there are product demonstrations and companies vamping, there is also an undercurrent. A feeling that one gets that great minds are meeting in the corners, discussing innovations and scientific theories. The murmur was most loudly heard for me in the Electronic Garden, which is a collection of the newest ideas that range from art pieces to possible theme park attractions to the next step from the Jet Propulsion Laboratories.

In this issue we are continuing on with our Student Corner and Hidden Treasures columns. I hope that a number of our readers are finding these new articles useful. Are we missing something? Which specific topics or places would you like to have addressed? Please drop us a line. We are always interested in listening.

Until Next Time,

Heather

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editor@awn.com
September 1997

NEW Chats and Discussions

I have just read with great interest the articles by Jo Jürgens and Guionne Leroy, both speak about stop-motion animation and their resulting development into 3D.

I would very much like to email them as I have become interested in entering the animation world after my visit to Annecy a few months ago. However, I have a dilemma of where to start. It is a fascinating but disorientating world particularly where the novice is concerned when trying to find a foothold. I have been offered a place in a studio which would give me good training in stop-motion animation. I have been mentally rejecting this idea in favor of a direct entry into computer animation, but in Jo Jürgens article he does mention the need, in particular of having sculpting knowledge as a basis for future 3D computer work. The same goes for Guionne Leroy in that she trained in stop-motion animation and then went on to work for the prestigious company Pixar. It seems that a good familiarity in the media of stop-motion/claymation is essential unless entering the 2D area, where the standard of drawing has to be very high amongst other things.

If possible I would appreciate the ability to contact these people in order to "steal" a little of their time per email, or if possible could you email my dialogue here onto them? I live in Germany so to call them by phone

would not pose a problem either, from my point of view.

Many thanks.

Yours Sincerely,
Robert W. L. Butt

Dear Robert,

Thank you for your keen interest! You were not alone in your admiration of Guionne and Jo's articles. We received quite a few letters and emails. As a result we are going to be vigorously integrating topics from the magazine into the Animation World Network Discussion Forum at http://www.awn.com/forum/index.html. We will start having some of our authors be special guests in the discussions so that they and everyone interested worldwide can have an active, thought provoking conversation. Stay glued to the Weekly Animation Flash Email Newsletter for when we will start certain forums with special guests. If you do not receive the Flash you can sign up or it at http://www.awn.com/register.html. All the latest industry and site news will arrive to you via email absolutely free.

We look forward to announcing when Jo and Guionne will be joining us!

Sincerely
The Editors

SIGGRAPH: Past and Present

I know your article has long since gone to press, but I wanted to thank you for your very professional approach to it. I did review the article and am pleased that you'll be publishing it.

- Steve Cunningham

Dear Steve,

Thank you very much. We were very pleased with the reception Joan Collins' article, "SIGGRAPH: Past and Present" received at SIGGRAPH 97 and online. We heard through the grapevine that many people found it enlightening and useful. I hope in the future that we can do more articles featuring SIGGRAPH members and their fascinating work.

Sincerely,
The Editors

A New Resource

I'm e-mailing you regarding your article in AWM Issue 2.5, August `97.

I am a 3D animator/compositor of TV commercials and would just like to say that I whole heartedly agree with what you've heard in that computers are no more than just another tool in the filmmakers arsenal. Computers cannot think, reason, or create - nor should they ever be relied upon to do so. Even though

there is no stopping their increasing involvement in all stages of production, I believe that they can only ever assist (and never replace) human creativity.

Disney knew this to be the case, and as such, when creating Toy Story, chose not to employ a team composed only of "computer operators." Instead, they took creative people with training in traditional cel animation and trained them over the course of two years to use this new tool. They were foremost, animators who already understood how to make a character come to life on screen, utilizing all the concepts of animation - squash, stretch, etc.

You needn't worry, Heather that you will ever be out of work.

daniel@filmgraphics.com

Dear Daniel,

We heartily agree. The computer's aid is going to help many filmmakers and artists realize a new storytelling vision and that is very exciting. It has also been pointed out that similarly, studio execs have never put just anyone in front of a computer and expected them to write the next, "Casablanca." (However, after seeing a few of this summer's "blockbusters," it might be worth a try....)

The Editors

Comic Books, A Desert Island Response

The first comic book I would choose is Kurt Busiek's Astro City. This book takes classic superheroes and their world in a different way. It doesn't simply concentrate on the superheroes, but also addresses the ordinary citizens of the city - the ones who point up and say "Look up in the sky!" And, thanks to Busiek's writing, you realize that these "ordinary" people are worthy, too.

The second is the limited series, Batman: The Dark Knight by Frank Miller. It is the four-part comic that finally rescued Batman from the horrid camp atmosphere of the '60's television series. I like to think it was the series that made DC Comics finally grow up.

Third, I'd have to take The Tick. Ben Edlund's character, although he doesn't produce regularly or often enough, is absolutely unforgettable. He recognizes that superheroes are ridiculous, and emphasizes exactly where the ridicule deserves to go.

Finally, I'd like an English translated version of Rumiko Takahashi's Ranma 1/2. (Yes, you anime purists, I want it in English! Do you think they watch Tiny Toons in the original language in Tokyo, you jerks?) Despite my initial dislike of anime, Ranma won me over; he/she and the other characters are people I'd like to know.

Thomas E. Reed

Dear Thomas,

Thank you for participating!

Sincerely,
The Editors

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A Conversation with: Arlene Sherman and Abby Terkuhle

Hosted by Mo Willems

August 6, 1997
Il Bucco Restaurant, New York

If you want to catch up on the latest independent animation, your best bet is to tune your television to either Sesame Street or MTV. For the past 29 years Sesame Street has been the repository of some of the most inventive animated shorts in America. By the time MTV hit the air, it took its cue from Sesame Street, and recruited independents to supply them with odd, quirky i.d.s and shorts. MTV pushed the limits of animation techniques, changing the visual landscape for almost all television while Sesame Street, with its loose format, eagerly emulated MTV's experimentation, commissioning increasingly eccentric and vibrant films. I recently had a dinner conversation with the two people in charge of this wonderfully symbiotic relationship, President of MTV Animation and Creative Director of MTV, Abby Terkuhle and Sesame Street's Supervising Producer, Arlene Sherman, to discuss the current state of animation and enjoy some great biscotti.

Mo Willems: What are you not looking for in a film?

Arlene Sherman: Well, I can start by saying that people that normally would come to me, they come with a pre-conception because what we do is for children. What I'm not looking for is something that would be typically thought of as something that would appeal to children, which usually means, not in a positive sense, playing down to them, stylistically.

At this time, the wine arrives. After a conversation regarding the bottle, it is poured and ...

All: Cheers!

Left to right: Mo Willems, animator/director, Arlene Sherman, Supervising Producer on CTW's *Sesame Street*, and Abby Terkuhle, President of MTV Animation and Creative Director of MTV. Photo by Melissa Chimovitz. © 1997 Animation World Network.

MW: So, something that isn't a "kiddie" film. And you, Abby?

Abby Terkuhle: What I'm not looking for is formula. We purposely created a blank slate, a tabula rasa that we could always change. That was really the big idea behind our logo. So now we have hundreds of these animated i.d.s built up over the years, and it gets harder and harder, but its still possible to come up with new ideas and also to sort of re-invent the approach. So, as opposed to having the logo in the ten second piece, we challenge directors and animators to come up with the logo in a different way. And that extends to our long form programming, too. I'm looking for something that you wouldn't find on a network or in a commercial.

MW: That brings up an interesting question which I think applies to both. How important is new technology or formal issues? How important is it that they have a new look or a different look?

AT: To me, I think a good concept is more important than any technology. It's not about which computer you use, its about the idea first. I find, some of my favorite ideas have been the most simple ones. (Colossal) Pictures did a Generic M, which was a bar code "M," and then we played Muzak [over it]. It was a great idea. We are committed to exploring new technologies, but I find the idea always comes first.

AS: I agree with that totally. The most important thing is the concept. It's really form following function. The idea is first, then what technique you use is what technique best serves the idea.

MW: Have you ever come across people that have come up to you with a great idea, but the technique or the form of it is wrong, and you say, "Well, this would be great in that technique, or this shouldn't be cel, this should be stop motion, or, you know..."

AT: I think that's happened, but pretty much I let the creators decide. I try not to muddle with their ideas and their choice of techniques. I'm not an animator, and I leave that up to the people. I let them go and trust they know what they're doing.

"We grew up on cartoons, and cartoons grew up with us." - Abby Terkuhle

AS: Well, I guess sometimes the people that you go after, you go after them because they have a specific style or technique or a sensibility. So that already is dictating what form or technique they'll be working in. But sometimes the idea may be generated from us. Some things lend themselves better to a specific style, to, say, traditional cel animation as opposed to, if we want to spend a little extra money ... 3D CGI. Those kinds of things do sometimes come into play. For the most part, though, since you're working with someone who's an independent, you're going after them because you like their style. And so you want them to work in the style they are most comfortable in. So, I think more than changing their style, you might adapt an idea that fits their style.

MW: That actually leads right into the next question. How important is the filmmaker's vision and how much can it be changed to meet your needs? Changed isn't the right word, maybe....

AT: For me its usually length. I'll never forget Mike Judge before we went into series. In a weak moment, he said "Well, these characters, should I draw them a little better?" And I said, "No, Mike. Don't touch a thing. They look like a 14 year-old drew them. They're perfect." They were kind of naive or outsider in that way. They were his vision and his characters. That said, if we need something that's 22 minutes and its coming in 24 minutes, we might say, "Well, we will make changes."

AS: Well I think its actually interesting because, for us [Sesame Street], we are informational. We have to get a piece of information across, and time is not an issue with us. If I commission something for 30 seconds and it ends up being 32 seconds, or 28, it's okay. That's the luxury of the magazine format that it has to fit in. Time is really not the issue. It's conceptual that's the issue. And so, because I'm going after people who aren't necessarily privy to how you teach a four-year-old to recognize a certain symbol, that's where our input will come in. How's the most productive way, within your style and sensibility, to adapt for our purposes?

MW: The really interesting thing there is the idea that Sesame Street is definitely informational. There is sort of "hard knowledge" that has to come across. Abby, do you feel that MTV has that?

AT: Well I think first and foremost we [MTV] are about entertainment, but we have initiated storyboard competitions that have been around a pro-social theme. We've done those [Free Your Mind] for two years in a row. We started off with an environmental theme, then a world problems, and most recently, Free Your Mind has looked at racial, sexual and religious intolerance. We got 2,000 storyboards from every corner of the world. It was really exciting. We commissioned ten, and they aired all over the world. I think animators respond particularly well to something that's very educational, pro-social....

AS: You know what's great about it is that on Sesame Street you're never starting with a blank piece of paper. You're getting a piece of information across. Beyond that, you can go in any direction you want. There is all kinds of freedom. It is easy to call in 2,000 storyboards when you've got a concept, or a piece of information. I think its really interesting. Since I've been commissioning animation on Sesame Street, the thing that has really influenced our animation, as far as MTV, is that we use a lot of the same people.

AT: We do.

AS: So I think our sensibilities are definitely the same and the same kind of structural thing that we are trying to attract. We are trying to teach through entertainment and what engages children most is incredible colors, wonderful music, and innovative styles that are captivating. I mean, I got so many ideas, and signed so many people by watching Liquid Television. I can just name people like Jim Blashfield or, when we would do Muppet music videos, it really was inspired by that whole genre of MTV. The whole idea of Sesame Street was to make it look "as good" as the rest of television. We know kids were watch-

ing MTV, and they were responding to it. Initially, the animation was inspired by commercials. We knew, by studying children's responses, that commercials were highly produced, they were innovative and they were repetitive. Seen over and over again. So we took our cue from that. And you know when MTV came around, it was this whole other phenomenon, of taking musical form, and codifying it, identifying it, in some very innovative, wonderful, free ways.

AT: Always with a wink. I think we share that. We have that in common. The wink is so important in everything we do.

AS: Absolutely!

MW: Arlene brought up a point...One of the things I found, working for Sesame Street, that I really enjoy, is the limitation. That is to say, well, how am I going to find a way to talk about the letter "S" or to talk about imagination....and work around it? Are there other limitations that MTV has, that are practical limitations, that inspire and make the work better?

AT: I think so. Our logo is not particularly user-friendly, when you think about it. It's a big, blocky "M." That in and of itself is a challenge, and I think for creative people, that excites them. It's like: "How do I solve this problem?" "How do I breathe life into this block?"

AS: You know what's really interesting that you've done with the logo, that I have to really commend you on is, you're right, it's a big blocky "M." How many reincarnations of that? It's so inspiring; all of the different approaches to that. A lot of the people that have been rejected by you, then send me their stuff. So, I've seen the gamut of what you've chosen, and its all at a very high level, and it's so similar to what I do.

MW: It really is an icon. That's the one thing that you guys have. I mean that is something that, even if you flashed it for 15 frames on the screen, people are going to recognize that as an icon.

AS: It's interesting that you've kept that identity, with all different kinds of interpretations of it.

AT: Well, it's really come to symbolize what our brand means. It's ever-changing. It's irreverent. It really symbolizes what MTV is about, and we like to even break our own rules sometimes. We've done a live-action i.d., one of my favorites. There's a guy who sneezes into his napkin, and says "Oh look, I've made an MTV logo!" So you don't even see it. It's an anti-i.d. Wow! What a great idea! An i.d. that doesn't show the logo.

AS: Because that icon is so built into everybody's head, that you can do that. It's great.

The food arrives. What is everyone having?

MW: The duck is for me, and the rabbit is for Arlene.

AS: I'm eating Thumper.

MW: I'm eating Donald. That's okay, because Donald was a bastard.

After comparing dishes and samples of food ('Want a bite?') the discussion continues...

MW: I think we've established that there are a lot of similarities between what you guys do. There is almost a pattern, a growth pattern, going up. There is one very different thing, on a practical level, that I wanted to talk about. MTV is going more and more out of their studio. What is good and bad about that? And, Arlene, your work is almost all independent. You don't have any studio or any sort of set-up for animators. How is that?

"The child of today doesn't have the same needs as the child when you were growing up. We're very aware of that, and we're constantly changing." - Arlene Sherman

AT: At MTV, we still look everywhere for the best idea. The best idea will always win, whether it comes from in house, or out of house. But you're right, we do have a studio now, and we have a talent pool. We like to challenge that talent pool and give them opportunities to pitch ideas for i.d.s or programming or whatever. So, we have commissioned a lot from within, but I think its only because we have a good talent pool. We haven't done that at the exclusion of going outside.

MW: Are the resources that you have available to independents that you pull from outside?

AT: Yes, people come in and they can use our equipment. We can budget something internally or externally. In some cases, it might be cheaper to do it independently.

MW: And Arlene, so the question for you is, you work solely independently ... well, even that's not necessarily true, because you often take care of music, voices and

effects.

AS: Some of that is a control issue. Some people are much stronger in terms of visual strength. We can provide them, because we have that at our facility, a wonderful band, great composers, good writers. So it depends on the strengths and weaknesses of people. Some people are the total package and some people need that help which we can certainly offer them. The economic issue is that necessity, is the mother of invention, and there are certain things that we can provide, because we are offering people such low budgets.

AT: Another thing we have in common!

AS: Certainly nobody is going to get rich by doing this. They're going to have a lot of freedom, and they're going to have a lot of fun.

Animation combines art with motion, brings the filmmaking together with the art world." - Abby Terkuhle

MW: Is that always a trade-off?

AT: I think so. Definitely we can promise creative freedom, but you're not going to retire on one of our dimes.

MW: I've worked for both of you, As an independent animator for Sesame Street, and on Beavis for MTV. At Sesame, I find that the freedom is tremendous. That's what I enjoy about being able to make those films. Every year I get to do something I haven't done before, that nobody else in their right mind, except for Arlene, would let me do! That's a great joy!

AS: I don't know if I want that on the tape! We'll have Barishnikov coming in, wanting to be a tap dancer! Because we are limited by our budgets, the way that we can really exist, within the budget, is to go the independent route. We don't have any in-house facilities, in terms of making animation, or making that happen. We can, however, provide music, sound effects, voices. We work with all of these incredible puppeteers who have a range of voices, talent, to help the person along, both financially and aesthetically and conceptually. That's the way we can help the budgetary situation a lot. Where it gets a little dicey is when you want to experiment with some very high end kind of things. If I work with Pixar or Will Vinton, its because they have a special feeling for Sesame Street. For instance, when Will Vinton decided to go CGI, one of their first experiments [Hammertime] was on a Sesame Street project. They can safely try out their new equipment. With Pixar, I was helping to train their animators for Toy Story. They needed to gear up a lot of people, so the Pixar people and I had a mutual feeling about the show and sensibility, and so I would never know when I was getting another animation. I would approve the storyboards, then I would get these packages in the mail, with these wonderful Luxo Jr. pieces. I've had to work a lot with relationships, and use the good feeling that Sesame Street is promoting. Working as a producer is a real advantage there, because people want to work for the show.

MW: This is the question for people just starting out. Would you pass over an animator, that you recognize has potential, but they're just not there yet; it may be technical, it may be writing, may be aesthetic. What would you recommend that they do before they come back?

AT: I think each case is different. Usually I would protect something. Even when the technique is brilliant, but the idea is not quite where it should be. So, go think about how you can give it a wink, because right now it doesn't have a wink. That's where i.d.s come in. I've been talking a lot about i.d.s, but we also do series production now, and that requires a lot of drafts, a lot of storyboard revisions, a lot of casting, and you don't get it the first time, it's a process.

MW: What does the artist do? The artist may pitch a series or an i.d...the honest response is what?

AS: Find a writer. You know, writing is so important. I think because you're dealing with the visual medium of animation, where you can break all the physical rules of the world, that it gets overlooked. The success of The Simpsons is due directly to the best writing on television. It's more real than any sitcom on television, that family. Look at any of them, Rugrats, and of the really successful animated shows, the writing is there. The writing is generating characters and performances that are wonderful.

MW: Then by necessity the independent animator really should be a writer as well...a writer who happens to be able to draw?

AS: Or seeing where you're strengths and weaknesses are. If you're a strong writer, you can write. If not, find somebody who

can.

AT: It is possible to find it in one package. Look at Mike Judge, with him it's voice, character, style, vision. That's rare. You need to team people together. A writer and an animator, a collaborative effort.

AS: It's about putting the right group of people together. I always think you're the guy standing behind someone playing solitaire, saying, "Can you put that black Jack on that red Queen?" It's like you're really just sort of guiding this team that you put together — hopefully to have enough faith in this team — to let them do what they want, etc.

AT: Judge started as an independent. He had done this cartoon at home. He came to New York, and I was so excited, I said, "Mike! We got money to do 65 of these!" And he turned white as a ghost...I said, "Don't worry, we'll get help." So we built a team of writers and we put it together.

AS: You saw something, an independent coming to you with a very naive style, and you guided him, you said, "Don't change that!" You saw something in him.

AT: It was less about the style, and more about the characters. He defined these universal characters.

AS: My husband can't stay away from it ! [Beavis & Butt-head]

MW: It's ironic that it's a producer guiding by saying, "Don't change."

AS: I think that's the way if you're a successful producer. My whole thing is that if you see something in someone, you hire them, and let them go, because you have that confidence in them. It's a very successful thing to do, to say, "No, keep it the way it is." That's having a vision.

AT: It was risky. It was the first thing. The animation people said, "God, what did you do?"

AS: We are to a certain extent, in a situation where we can take risks. That's why I love working at this job. If something bombs, it's not life or death. Certainly if a series bombs, it's a bit more. But if a logo or an interstitial thing bombs...

AT: We tend to put stuff on the air, we want to keep it on, but we air everything.

AS: Series are much different. Short form interstitials, it's not the end of the world. You have to just shrug it off and say okay. Television doesn't allow you that luxury.

MW: I have a friend of mine who is a doctor. If I have a bad day, something went wrong with a production, I think to myself that the worst thing that could happen is that some child in Minnesota is going to say, "Mommy, I wasn't thoroughly entertained today." That perspective is important. Going on to define that prior question, can you estimate what percentage of your filmmakers write and direct their own films, and what percentage team up?

AS: I'd say that it's probably 60% team up, 40% work independently, maybe 70/30. I often "blame" this on the MTV generation. It's so great talking to you, Abby, because we're really coming from the conceptual angle. It's what I tell young animators, it's all style over substance. It's like bad Broadway, when you walk out talking about the scenery. What I find with a lot of people now, is that they come to you with a lot of visual styles, but they can't write, they don't have a concept, so it's a shortcut for me, really. I have this great team of writers, they're wonderful. Thank you Mo, you're one of them. I can make up for that deficiency in doing that.

MW: What makes an engaging character? Is that an answerable question?

AT: I hate to use the word, but with our audience, usually if they can identify in the character, or find them relevant to their lives in some way.

MW: Are you very aware of your audiences?

AS: We are trying to teach something, so we try to stay within the perimeters of pre-schoolers. However, what I like to do is challenge those kids too. I don't want to have pre-conceptions about them, such as a three-year-old doesn't like a certain kind of music, or get that book, or whatever. Kids are sponges. If something's engaging, and it's relatable-to, it doesn't have to fit into a box, you can stretch the boundaries.

MW: If kids are sponges, then teenagers act like sponges, right?

AT: Well, we're very concerned with our audience, because they change. We have a new audience every three years. They move through MTV.

MW: Move their way up to CNN....

AS: Hopefully!

They all share a laugh.

AT: We talk to our audience. We listen to them. We like them. We employ them.

MW: Sesame Street doesn't have any three-year-old interns do they?

AS: No, but we've done some kids animation.

AT: It's very important. We definitely want to lead them, too, and challenge them in the same way, which I don't think a lot of television does.

MW: Talk to my generation for a minute. Talk to the kids who first saw Sesame Street and first saw MTV. Why was it such a logical jump, and what has changed now? What is my kid going to be seeing?

AS: Your child will be watching Sesame Street. The part of the show that stays the same, when the kid turns the television set off, he feels better about himself. That's what we want, self-inclusion. However, we need change. The child of today doesn't have the same needs as the child when you were growing up. We're very aware of that, and we're constantly changing. What does the kid need to know? What's happening in the world, or their street corner, or backyard, that we can do to engage them and relate to them, so that we can teach them through entertaining. The basic fabric of the show stays the same but the trappings of it change, and the subject matter changes.

MW: What about when my kids are teenagers?

AT: Well, having a three-year-old myself, is very interesting, because I might not have watched much CTW or Sesame Street, but I watch it with my kid now. It's fun, and it probably hasn't changed in basic ways. It's kept those values. It's smart. It's well-produced, and I love it. When my kid is a teenager, I don't know, things will change so much.

MW: There is something about Sesame Street though, that makes parents want to watch it together with their kids. Is MTV the opposite, i.e., this is not for adults...

AT: Absolutely. Nickelodeon is based on that. MTV is based on that. Even VH-1 is based on that. They're all very niche-targeted services. I would hope and pray, well, let's just say that if MTV is not different when my kid's a teenager, then it won't be around. It's got to change.

AS: And also the marketplace changes so much.

AT: Hopefully, we'll share some core values of humor, risk-taking, unpredictability, irreverence, those things that both of us cherish.

AS: How long have you been there Abby?

AT: Eleven years.

AS: So you've seen a change, then.

AT: Oh, quite a bit. When I was first there, it was all music, and what brought me there was the animated i.d.s. It was something that Fred Seibert had started. We've grown our animation over the years, from those ten second i.d.s to commissioning shorts from people like Henry Selick and a lot of the directors who did those, to Liquid Television, which is where we showcased them, to spin-offs from Liquid, like Aeon Flux and Beavis and Butt-head. And it continues from there.

AS: Now you're doing a new version of Liquid Television ?

AT: Yes, Cartoon Sushi, which is an animated variety show. It is more humor focused, and less experimental focused. But then we are thinking of "Cartoon Sashimi" which could be more experimental focused.

They all laugh again.

MW: That would be great!

AS: I think humor is also something that we share. When people ask for a thumbnail sketch of what Sesame Street is, I always say it's a comedy show that teaches. We have the best comedy writers on TV working for us. That's why it works. We have these incredible characters. They can be funny, and they can do the corniest stuff in the world and get away with it.

MW: I have a more personal question for both of you. What brought you to animation, both career-wise and personally? What is the attraction for you? What grabs you?

AT: In school I had a professor at Loyola University in New Orleans, by the name of Bill Kuhns. He would bring in Eastern European films from Zagreb and Czechoslovakia and Poland. It blew me away. Here is not only a different visual style than the Warner Bros., Disney thing we'd all grown up with, but this was animation that was being used to communicate a political and social message. It was like, "Wow!" I had a lot of fun with this guy. I'd go over to his house, and we'd mix soundtracks. I wanted to work in the film business. I got a degree in film. I always had a love

for animation, an appreciation for animation, an appreciation for art. I married a painter. Animation combines art with motion, brings the filmmaking together with the art world. So I had been at Saturday Night Live, doing the commercial parodies. Then I was over at MTV. Both were kind of dream jobs. But my first question was "Will I be responsible for commissioning the i.d.s?" You know, it was a curatorial job. And the answer was yes, so I went over there. That's my story.

AS: Well my story is that I started out as a filmmaker. I was a painter before I was a filmmaker, but I wasn't a good painter. So I decided to take pictures of things so that I wouldn't have to render myself. I worked for many years as a film editor, which was sort of the route that happened when you got out of NYU Film School. Women at that time, you became a film editor.

"I love being able to break all of these rules of the physical world.The limits are your imagination.You don't have to have Steven Spielberg's budget to do that."
- Arlene Sherman

MW: Yes, there was some sort of official treaty...

AS: That's right, that was the way into the industry. I lived in Europe, after I went to film school, for five or six years, and made some experimental films. Those were the things that interested me, music and art, and breaking the rules. Not narrative filmmaking at all. Then when I came back to America, I suddenly wasn't in the union, I couldn't find work immediately as a film editor. I got this temporary job at this television show called Sesame Street. I recalled when I was in college, watching it, and thinking, "This is so cool." So, I worked on the show, first as a production manager on a remote they were doing in Puerto Rico. I'd never been out of the edit room. I was standing there with keys to all of these blue Chryslers in my hand, wondering which goes to which at the end of the day. I was working with a great group of people that were really of the same mindset that I was. They were trying things, breaking the rules. I also felt good about it. I never thought I'd be working in television. I was a real snob that way. So I sort of worked my way up through the ranks, as a film producer. And that's where I got involved in animation, was commissioning animation. My background in art made it such an incredible marriage. I love being able to break all of these rules of the physical world. The limits are your imagination. You don't have to have Steven Spielberg's budget to do that. It's the idea that makes it happen. I became so fond of it, and also so fond of that independent animator community. It's so amazing, the talent and ideas that are out there. So, because of my connections with downtown artists and my lifestyle, then I would think to bring William Wegman on to do something for Sesame Street, or Keith Haring, or those people, at that time. I've grown so much, and I've learned about animation, and learned to appreciate it. Conversely, as I was learning, the whole animation explosion was happening around me. So, that's how I got into it.

MW: Can anyone make a wild guess at what the spark for the animation explosion was? I'm not talking about a specific event, but why all of a sudden people were ready for it?

AT: I remember when I first started in '85 or '86, there was nothing going on. MTV and Sesame Street were the only ones supporting the small animation community.

MW: I was in film school then, studying animation. People couldn't understand what I was doing there.

AT: I don't know, really. I did an interview today, and was asked the same question. Mainly about adult animation, why is that coming to be? I think The Simpsons were a pivotal turning point.

MW: That's more of an abstract think, I think. But what's at the core of it? Why did a certain generation of people attach to it?

AT: We grew up on cartoons, and cartoons grew up with us. So there was an appreciation there. Also, to echo what Arlene said, its the visual equivalent of music.

Mo Willems' animated films have appeared on MTV, HBO, The Cartoon Network, IFC, Sesame Street, *The Tournee of Animation and Spike & Mikes Festival of Animation. He has won an Emmy for his work as a script writer on* Sesame Street, *and is the creator of* The Off-Beats, *currently in its second season on Nickelodeon's* KaBlam!

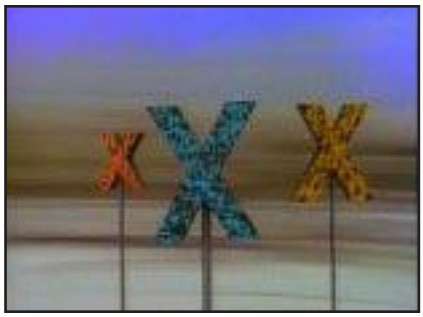
CTW and MTV: Shorts of Influence

by Chris Robinson

"To be called an Oscar nominee pales next to being able to call myself a Sesame Street animator."
-Paul Fierlinger

"What [MTV] should be lauded for is that it has increased the visual sensibilities, the visual palettes of an entire generation. It's expanded how people see. So, that's a great thing."
-Candy Kugel, Buzzco and Associates

Despite a prosperity of pages devoted to animation over the last decade, few have dealt with the enormous influence and impact of the Children's Television Workshop (CTW) and MTV on the animation industry, and indeed, the media industry as a whole. Long before the likes of Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network were creating artist driven shows, MTV was producing hip interstitials created by independent animators. Long before MTV, CTW was also compli-



Jane Aaron's *X Song* uses stop-motion animation to introduce *Sesame Street* viewers to, [what else?] the letter "X." © CTW

Sally Cruikshank has lent her distinct neo-thirties style to several *Sesame Street* spots, including *From Your Head*, a music video teaching kids about using their imagination. © CTW

menting their shows with independent animation. Now, CTW and MTV might seem like strange bedfellows, but they actually have a great deal in common. From a negative perspective, both have been routinely criticized by artists for their stinginess, and for years have been accused of stunting the attention spans of the younger generation. But without a doubt, their positive impact on the animation industry outweighs the negatives. First and foremost, they were the first two companies to find consistent commercial uses for independent animators. This has had a huge impact on the animation industry in a variety of ways: it has provided much needed jobs for animators, brought their work beyond the festival circuit and to the general public, energized the New York animation scene, garnered critical respect for commercial animation, influenced the advertising and feature film industry, and arguably, paved the way for today's boom in animation.

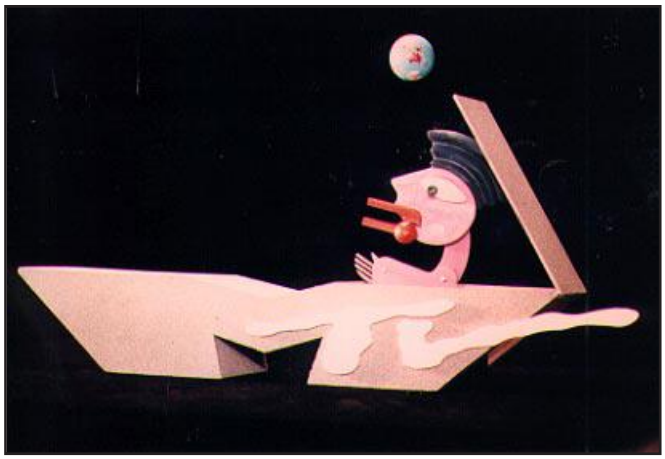
The Roots of CTW and MTV

Certainly CTW and MTV did not evolve out of thin air. UPA's limited, affordable, and simple style first made people believe that it was even possible to do animation for television. This had an enormous influence on Hanna-Barbera and Filmation, whose appropriation of UPA's style opened the doors for television animation in the 1960s, and paved the way for CTW. Fortunately, CTW adapted UPA's more positive elements. They created smart films, like Gerald McBoing Boing, that appealed to children, but did not talk down to them. UPA, along with Paramount, who Linda Simensky of Cartoon Network says, was "more UPA than UPA," had been producing independent inspired shorts thirty years before CTW. In fact, the UPA influence extended right down to CTW hiring UPA people like Howard Beckerman and John Hubley.

CTW's notion of combining

Karen Aqua created *Tempo* in a series of shorts about the basic concepts of music. © CTW

animation and education was also not digging up any new ground. Disney produced many "educational" shorts as did Bell Labs for



Henry Selick created many i.d.s and shorts for MTV during the 1980s. Shown here is the stop-motion *Dollhouse M* (still and production shot), *Contortion M*, and *Bathtub M*. Photos courtesy of Henry Selick

their Science series. The Bell Science series combined live-action with animated shorts created by Shamus Culhane, Chuck Jones, and Friz Freleng, among others. The series obviously had an important influence on CTW in their using animation to make an educational subject more entertaining. But, CTW was the first company to combine consistently education and entertainment. By doing this they found an on-going commercial use for independent animators, and brought independent animation to a wider audience.

Despite an almost entirely different mandate, MTV, in many ways, owes its existence to CTW. Aside from 1970's LP cover art, former MTV producer Fred Seibert acknowledges the tremendous influence of CTW. "I'd say the two biggest influences on what we did were straight cartoons (i.e. Flintstones, Bugs Bunny) and Sesame Street. Sesame Street was important because they dealt in short form and they were willing to use all sorts of styles."

Buzz Potamkin, who worked on the first MTV Top of The Hour, notes, "If CTW had not been there, the audience for MTV would never have appeared because it was the visual education that you got from CTW. We had long discussions in 1981/82 about the fact that it could only work if the audience was prepared for the syntax and CTW had paved the way for that syntax to work: the combination of live-action and animation, the short attention spanned verse."

CTW and MTV have also broken the often elitist boundaries of animation festivals.

The Birth of CTW and Artists' Reactions

CTW began in 1969 in New York. As Linda Simensky, the inspiration behind the Sesame Street 25th Anniversary screenings, has noted, Sesame Street producers complimented their program with animation because it was an ideal "technique for creating incongruity." Initially the animation shorts were done by Executive Producer, Dave Connell's Imagination Films. However, the producers wanted the animation to act as short, highly produced commercials that would be repeatable. They wanted a very broad look. This led to hiring independent animators like, for example, Paul Fierlinger.

"I made my first film for them in 1971," says Fierlinger, creator of Teeny Little Superguy. He had just arrived from Czechoslovakia at the time and was desperately in need of work. "In those days [Producer] Edith Zornow would give me a curriculum. The curriculum has about thirty pages dealing with what topics they want to address for the next season (e.g. letter A, figure 8, love, backwards-forward). They made about 180 programs a year in the early days. To this day, working with

Sesame Street is a great asset. It has got me work. It has got me commercials. [Commercial clients] don't want *Sesame Street*, of course, but they know you are a good animator if you've worked there."

Sally Cruikshank, known for her surreal, musical influenced work, started with CTW in 1988. "[They] sent three songs and that is how it started," explains Cruikshank. "[I] didn't use the curriculum, I've had a really easy time [essentially] just adapting songs. Arlene Sherman [CTW producer] has been tuned into my musical interest, so she has chosen appropriate music. I've really liked working with them because they give you complete freedom and they're very supportive and non-interfering. I wish there were more work like that available."

MTV's *Aeon Flux* started as a segment on *Liquid Television*, then became a full series on MTV. © MTV Networks.

Every single piece I did for them I varied the style and technique so that I got to explore things that I'd wanted to do. - Henry Selick

New York-based animator, Jane Aaron has done numerous shorts like *River*, *Lake*, and *Next to Song* for *Sesame Street* since the early 1990s. "I pretty much see what they need. I propose an idea based on the curriculum. Arlene really understands the work conceptually and I think she understands that she is working with artists. [Arlene knows how to] combine the artist's vision and the curriculum. They are always interested in an unusual look. Their values are good. They really care about human and democratic values. They are all inclusive. This is a great thing to give to kids."

Animator Karen Aqua came into contact with CTW around 1989. CTW's willingness to allow her a freedom to experiment has remarkably led to a bridging of her two creative worlds, her personal films and her commercial films. The 3D characters in her personal short, *Perpetual Motion* were originally worked out in a *Sesame Street* piece. "Creatively, I am very happy to have them on my reel and submit them to festivals. Once we get beyond the concept, they are essentially my own little projects. There is a satisfaction in knowing that you have gotten your concept across unlike your own work where you are never sure if the idea got across. I like the sense of completeness."

And what exactly is this thirty page curriculum that everyone talks about? Arlene Sherman explains, "[The curriculum] expands each year. Everything is done through scrupulous research to make sure that its educationally correct. And after the pieces are produced it is tested with children to see what their comprehension and attention is. We have seminars with pre-school educators, psychologists, parents, writers, creative people and talk about what we should teach next. Our whole modus operation with the entertainment and charm is to get the kids ready for school."

CTW's impact has extended far beyond the personal experiences. As Buzz Potamkin notes, "I've always been very appreciative of their ability to support animation during the really dark days of animation in the late 1970s and 1980. A lot of people in New York would not be in animation today if it were not for the fact that CTW had been there for them."

We really changed the game of visual vocabulary on television. - Fred Seibert

MTV Begins

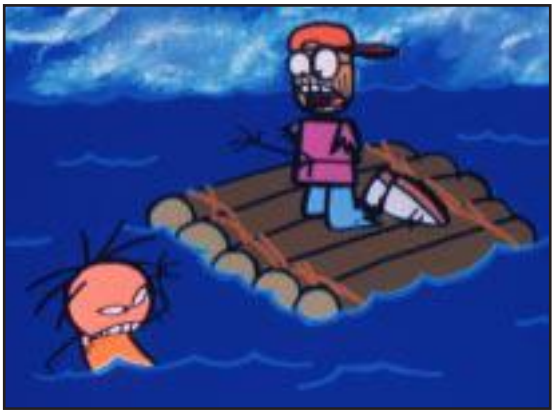
MTV launched in August of 1981. "Bob Pitman, Allan Goodman and myself," says Fred Seibert, "thought about animating little network pieces. We had no idea what pieces to animate, but we thought that animation would be a cool

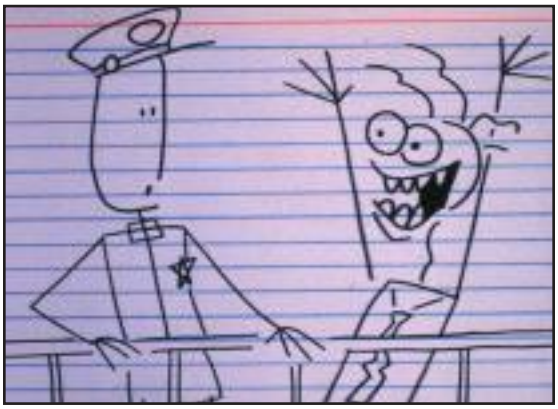
thing to do. Cartoons seemed to be the closest visual equivalent to rock and roll. We had grown up during the days of LP design and we wanted to make pieces that were as impactful on the video generation as album covers had been on ours. We wanted to create essentially the notion of the moving album cover."

Of course, to create the "moving album cover," one first needs animators. "We didn't know anything about festivals. We didn't know anything about ASIFA," adds Seibert. "We bought an animation issue of Millimeter magazine and called everyone that was listed. And then we looked at hundreds of reels." One of the pieces that really got Seibert's eye was an advertisement done by a New York company called Perpetual Motion Pictures.

"We [Perpetual Motion] did an ad for a San Francisco radio station," says Buzz Potamkin. "I don't know why but part of [the motivation] was artistic and part was simply [necessity]. We used photos with acetate over them and worked magic marker on top of that. Andy Warhol was doing Interview magazine covers and [we wondered] what it would look like if we did this in animation. Dale Pon, who was at NBC radio and audience development, was extremely supportive. He later became the ad agency for MTV. In Spring '81, Dale calls me and says these crazy guys on 6th Avenue are doing this thing called music television. They really needed a Top of the Hour, but didn't know what they wanted. Dale had shown them the radio ad we did and they were very interested in that. That was the start of the relationship. That campaign forced MTV onto Manhattan cable which is really what made MTV."

Animator Henry Selick (Slow Bob in The Lower Dimensions, James and The Giant Peach) took a somewhat different route to MTV in the late 1980s. "What they were doing in the station interstitials was pretty creative and I just figured that I could send in some work and they would love me immediately. It wasn't until I had a contact there, Peter Dougherty, that I started doing i.d.s for them. [There was] incredible freedom. I got to continue where I had left off after doing experimental films at CalArts. It was good for me. Every single piece I did for them I varied the style and technique so that I got to explore things that I'd wanted to do." Working for MTV didn't harm Selick's career either. "It helped. I had done a few independent short films but having stuff on MTV, people saw it. People were aware of [my work] and they enjoyed it."





***Stick Figure Theater*, a series of shorts by Robin Steele for MTV's *Liquid Television*. teele has since gone on to develop (with Nelvana) *Stickin' Around*, an animated series on Fox, and is now a director at Wild Brain. *Stick Figure Theater* © MTV Networks. *Stickin' Around* © Nelvana.**

Craig Bartlett created the 2D clay animation short, *Lillian Big Sister* for *Sesame Street* years before going on to create the *Hey Arnold!* series for Nickelodeon. © CTW.

The Industry Makes a Change

The influence of CTW and MTV extends well beyond the artists and into the entire animation industry. Prior to MTV, television animation was extremely limited in technique. However, when diverse animation styles proved to be marketable, the entire industry took note and suddenly, a variety of diverse animations began appearing on television. In the mid-1980s, CBS' Pee-Wee's Playhouse, which appeared within a MTV/CTW influenced structure, brought striking and innovative designs, off-beat, and, at times, adult humor, along with the forgotten techniques of stop-motion and clay animation, to Saturday morning television.

Now it seems that everyone, except Disney and Warner, is hiring independent animators and allowing them to work in their own personal styles. Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network produce artist driven shows, including Rugrats and the recent "What A Cartoon!" shorts series that was started at Hanna-Barbera while Fred Seibert was pres-

ident, respectively. Indeed, the very idea of an all-animation specialty channel like Cartoon Network would have been impossible before MTV's success. Although Klasky-Csupo carries a definite European influence, their diverse and unique designs (*Santo Bugito, Duckman, Ahh! Real Monsters*) would not have been possible for television without CTW and MTV.

"We really changed the game of visual vocabulary on television," adds Fred Seibert. "MTV opened up the door to saying visual vocabulary should be broad and it should be appropriate to the communication you are making. It should not be a copy-cat. I am very happy and proud of that we were able to break the back of the idea that only certain people were allowed to work in these mediums. Independent animators had always been shut out from the professional commercial world. I always thought that was just stupid."

MTV's new late-night animated series, *Daria,* grew out of a supporting character on *Beavis & Butt-head,* a series which itself originally stemmed from a short film by Mike Judge. Do you see a trend here? © MTV Networks.

Media Wide Pull

Thanks to the success of CTW and MTV, North American television and movie audiences are now able to see a diversity of styles and ideas. Animation features, previously limited to cute, traditional Disneyesque works, have exploded in recent years into a variety of styles from the computer animated, *Toy Story* to Tim Burton and Henry Selick's *Nightmare Before Christmas* to MTV's own off-beat *Beavis and Butt-head Do America.*

The awareness that animation sells has naturally expanded beyond the animation industry. More and more advertisers are using animation to sell their products. Animated commercials stand out from conventional live-action ads, and more importantly, CTW and MTV have created a generation of children and young consumers who trust animation. MTV and *The Simpsons* have made animation more fashionable, or "hipper," than ever before. Therefore, anyone seeing an animated commercial for a pair of shoes, is likely to think that those shoes must be pretty cool. Outside of superficialities though, many younger consumers have been psychologically groomed for the animated commercial. As Buzz Potamkin suggests, "CTW taught children to be observers of and believers in commercials because if commercials teach you how to count, they should also be able to teach anything like how to eat, what to drink, what to wear."

Ethics and psychology aside, the bottom line is that the advertising industry's current interest in animation has generated an increase in commercial animation houses, like J.J. Sedelmaier Productions, Inc., (Colossal) Pictures and Will Vinton Studios. All of whom, its interesting to note, have roots leading back to either CTW or MTV. The success has also opened up additional avenues for independent animators like Christine Panushka's Absolut Vodka Internet ad campaign which was very MTV influenced.

Honors By The Elite

In recent years, we have seen the influence of CTW and MTV come full circle. After years of feeding off the festival circuit, CTW and especially MTV are a regular presence in festival competitions. Karen Aqua's *Sesame Street* work has been shown at acclaimed festivals in Ottawa and Annecy. MTV Europe and MTV Japan, whose Top of The Hours have garnered awards in Ottawa and Holland, have had so many films in festival competitions it's impossible to begin to name them all.

CTW and MTV have also broken the often elitist boundaries of animation festivals. Increasingly, festivals are devoting a large portion of programming to commissioned work. In fact, one festival, the Holland Animation Film Festival, is the only animation festival with a competition devoted solely to commissioned films. Festival Director, Gerben Schermer notes, "MTV didn't influence the activities of the festival but it certainly helped us to explain to people what we were

doing. We did the same kinds of things, only from a different background and for different reasons. Too many people underestimate the possibilities of animation film as a communication instrument. MTV helped to put animation on the map as an art form. It showed that animation is not only for children and can be a valuable instrument in communicating a product in a different and unique way." Despite Schermer's denial of any direct MTV influence, it seems hardly possible, given the lack of quality commercial work at the time, that a festival devoted to commissioned animation could have existed prior to MTV.

CTW taught children to be observers of and believers in commercials because if commercials teach you how to count, they should also be able to teach anything like how to eat, what to drink, what to wear. - Buzz Potamkin

In general, the success of CTW and MTV has opened the doors for a resurgence of animation shorts. In addition to touring programs like Spike and Mike and the Tournee of Animation, more and more animation festivals are appearing. In fact traditionally biannual festivals like Annecy and Ottawa are now looking towards annual events to keep up with the increase of short work being entered. Also with the introduction of additional channels like TeleToon, a Canadian all-animation channel set to begin airing in October, there appears to be even more avenues opening up for independent animators.

Reaching Beyond the U.S.

Of course, festivals continue to serve as important venues for recruiting. In fact, thanks to the festival circuit, the influence of CTW, but more so, MTV has expanded beyond the borders of the USA. Animators like Canada's Marv Newland and Danny Antonucci, Poland's Piotr Dumala, Jerzy Kucia, and many others including England's The Quay Brothers, and Czech Jan Svankmajer, have all worked with MTV.

In Canada, outside of the National Film Board, there is no abundance of independent animation. Marv Newland's International Rocketship has been the rare exception of a thriving independent studio in Canada. Rocketship's i.d.s for MTV not only provided work for the studio, but they also provided some much needed exposure for Rocketship by bringing their own independent work to a larger audience. It has certainly paid off. Rocketship recently scored a commercial and artistic victory with their animated film, The Far Side, based on Gary Larson's strip. The film not only played on prime time television, but also won the Grand Prize at the 1995 Annecy Animation Festival.

Internationally, as Gerben Schermer notes, "It helped filmmakers to experiment with the film medium on the expenses of MTV. For example, the Quay Brothers made a few station calls for MTV Europe just do be able to express themselves without having to bother about the budget. Also a lot of filmmakers were able to use MTV as a showroom for their artistic skills."

A Job Too Well Done?

MTV and CTW have significantly contributed to creating today's tough media market. It is cruelly ironic that CTW and MTV's success has spawned a multitude of impersonators who, in the end, have come back to haunt them. In order to compete, MTV and CTW must continue to innovate against an increase in television channels and programming, video games, CD-Roms, the Internet, and other distractions. Whatever the future will be, there is no denying the impact that CTW and MTV initially had on the animation and media industry. By taking a risk on independent animation during a time when animation was not very fashionable, they not only provided much needed work for many artists, while exposing them to larger audiences, they also made it profitable. On one level, it has been a relationship made in heaven. The artists, the animation and advertising companies, and the viewers have all benefited from CTW and MTV's investment in independent animation.

Thanks to all the people who gave their precious time to chat; Mo Slater for transcribing, HK and WJ for patience; and SAFO staff for not killing me (yet).

Chris Robinson is the Executive Director of the Ottawa International Animation Festival, and the International Student Animation Festival of Ottawa (SAFO). When he is not stressing over festivals, he programs a monthly selection of exploitation films in Ottawa, and freelances for various magazines.

Tooning in the Fall Season

Don't be surprised when you notice cartoons are having more social sermons and educational tips than usual. That's because, this September, the United States federal government begins enforcing its requirements for television stations to air three hours per week of educational programming. Will the "FCC-friendly" cartoons entertain viewers enough to keep them from turning the channel? If not, they'll turn to the cable networks, who are unaffected by the FCC's educational mandate.

CBS

Don't look for any cartoons here. They've switched to news and live-action "FCC-friendly" shows. This ends the long-running Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, but, never fear, *their adventures will continue on Fox as a live-action series.*

Fox Kids Network

Fox is currently the ratings leader on network television. Still, they're totally revamping their Saturday morning schedule, while moving their current hits, Bobby's World, C-Bear and Jamal, Spider Man and *Casper,* to weekdays. *Life with Louie* and *Bobby's World* however, stay on Saturdays, as does *Casper* until October 11. Fox is going further by continually rearranging their line-up throughout the season by bringing in new, fresh programming. Will this keep them on top or just confuse the audience? Time will tell.

Produced by Nelvana Limited and Medialab, Stickin' Around will debut at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday mornings. This series was created by Robin Steele, whose style you may recognize from the Stick Figure Theater shorts on MTV's Liquid Television. Ned's Newt will premier at 9:00 a.m., replacing Casper starting on October 18. This show details the adventures of Ned and his pet newt, Newton. A victim of overfeeding, Newton grows into a huge monster and is Ned's very own superhero. This superhero, however, is part time. When the going gets tough...Newton goes back to his original four-inch length.

On Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m., Fox will air Space Goofs. This show was formerly called Home to Rent but was renamed at close to the last minute. The show stars five alien monsters who reside in the attic of an abandoned home and spend their time scaring potential renters. No doubt inspired by Nickelodeon's Ahhh! Real Monsters, this is the first European import produced by France's Gaumont Multimedia in association with ProSieben (Germany) and France 3 to pierce the U.S. market.

At 10:30 a.m., Fox will begin to air The Adventures of Sam & Max: Freelance Police, produced by Nelvana Entertainment in Canada, on October 4. It's based on Steve Purcell's comic book starring two crime-fighters: a rabbit and a dog.

***Sam & Max* .© Nelvana.**

***Invasion America* .© DreamWorks L.L.C.**

Original episodes of X-Men air at 11:30 a.m. until November, when a three-part preview of Stan Lee's The Silver Surfer will air. Produced by Saban Entertainment, Surfer replaces X-Men in January 1998.

Will the "FCC-friendly" cartoons entertain viewers enough to keep them from turning the channel?

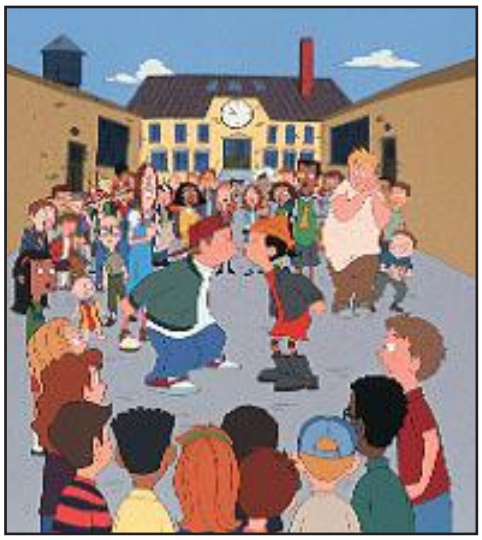
In February 1998, DreamWorks introduces its first animated comedy, Steven Spielberg Presents Toonsylvania, starring Igor, *the hunchbacked assistant of Dr. Frankenstein. The series reveals that it is actually Igor who is the genius, not the famous doctor.*

The remainder of Fox's Saturday morning is filled with live-

action programming: *Mowgli: The New Adventures of the Jungle Book, Ultimate Goosebumps,* and *Ninja Turtles: The Next Mutation.*

Kids' WB!

The Dubba-dubba-dubble-you Bee Network starts Saturday mornings with an "FCC-friendly" show, *Channel Umptee-3,* created



Recess. **© Disney. All Rights Reserved.**

by former Disney writer Jim George, executive-produced by Norman Lear and produced by Columbia TriStar in association with Act III Productions and Enchante/George. Story-edited by veteran humorist Mark Evanier (*Garfield & Friends*), the show stars a band of broadcasters who operate a pirate television station from "a fast-traveling super news van." Umptee-3's producer is Ogden, a 7-foot ostrich voiced by Rob Paulsen of *Animaniacs* fame. Also from Columbia TriStar is *Men in Black: The Series,* which of course capitalizes on the success of the live-action movie. Due to production delays, *Channel Umptee-3* and *Men in Black* premiere October 11, while the other series begin September 13.

At 9:00 a.m., and on weekday afternoons, *The New Batman/Superman Adventures* will alternate 41 episodes of *Superman* (including the 13 from the first season) with 24 new episodes of *Batman.* Producer Bruce Timm has revised the design of the *Batman* series, streamlining the characters and brightening Gotham City. Batgirl has learned Batman's secret identity, and teams with him on a regular basis. Dick Grayson has become a new superhero, Nightwing, while 12-year-old Tim Drake has become the new Robin. These Gotham Knights will tackle the usual rogue's gallery: Mr. Freeze, the Joker, Harley Quinn, Clayface, Catwoman, the Ventriloquist, and a new creation from producer/writer Paul Dini, Roxy Rocket. Guest appearances will come from the Demon and the Creeper. Also, Superman will have a three-part *World's Finest* crossover with Batman, in which they team up against Lex Luthor, the Joker and Harley Quinn.

Meanwhile, Supergirl will appear occasionally on *Superman,* in which they combat the threat of Darkseid and the New Gods. A hilarious Mr. Mxyptylk episode, written by Dini, premiered at the San Diego Comic Con, with frequent laughter and applause by fans. A spokesman noted that Bruce Timm, Paul Dini, and Alan Burnett had such an obvious handle on the DC heroes, why didn't Warners let them do the live-action feature versions?

At 10:00, *The Legend of Calamity Jane* also features such legends as Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, Buffalo Bill Cody and Wild Bill Hickock as they tame the Wild West. The French studio contre-allée originated and produced the project, while scripts and voices were done in the United States.

Fresh episodes of *Steven Spielberg Presents Pinky & the Brain, Steven Spielberg Presents Animaniacs,* and *The Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries* round out their Saturday morning.

On weekdays at 7:00 a.m., the very popular *Steven Spielberg Presents Tiny Toon Adventures* leaves Nickelodeon for the WB Network. At 7:30 a.m., FCC commitments rear their head again when reruns of TBS' *The Adventures of Captain Planet* air. In the afternoons, WB will rerun *Bugs 'n' Daffy* and *Steven Spielberg Presents Animaniacs.* New episodes of *Steven Spielberg Presents Pinky & the Brain* will air at 4:00 p.m. and feature more celebrity cameos this season. It will be followed by *The New Batman/Superman Adventures.*

WB Network (Prime Time)

Sometime in 1998, DreamWorks will premiere *Invasion America,* in which a teenager, David Carter, discovers he's part alien —

Extreme Dinosaurs **. © Bohbot Entertainment.**

and is the key to thwarting an invasion from outer space. One storyboard artist describes this as "the best action-adventure series since The Adventures of Jonny Quest."

ABC

The Disney-owned network has filled its schedule with product from its own studio, with the exception of The Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show and the educational live-action Science Court. The network boasts that four of its five program hours are "FCC friendly" — which means Bugs Bunny is ABC's only show done for pure entertainment.

***Rolie Polie Olie*, Nelvana's series of computer animated shorts, will air on The Disney Channel in 1998. © Disney. All Rights Reserved.**

At 8:00 a.m., 101 Dalmatians: The Series continues the adventures of the Dearly family (formerly Ratcliff, from the original movie), their polka-dotted pups and of course, Cruella DeVil and her bumbling henchmen. The new series eliminates their British accents, moves them to America, introduces a mix of eccentric farm animals, and streamlines the designs of the characters and their environment. The focus is on three pups and a chicken: the adventurous Lucky, the perpetually hungry Rolly, the New Age-minded Cadpig, and the practical Spot, the spotted chicken who thinks she's a dog. One episode, "A Christmas Cruella," is a candidate for a holiday prime time airing. Aside from its inspiration from Dickens, it's notable because it details why Cruella hates Dalmatian puppies.

101 Dalmatians: The Series comes from the same creative team responsible for The Lion King's Timon & Pumbaa, Bobs Gannaway and Tony Craig, along with executive producers Jim Jinkins and David Campbell of Jumbo Pictures, Inc., creators of Nickelodeon's Doug. Harvard Project Zero is the company that ensures Dalmatians will comply with FCC regulations for educational value.

While Disney is currently the leader in animated features and direct-to-videos, Disney's broadcast television product seeks to emulate rival studios. 101 Dalmatians uses the thick-and-thin line approach from Hanna-Barbera's 2 Stupid Dogs (which both Gannaway and Craig worked on), Recess echoes Klasky-Csupo, while Pepper Ann is reminiscent of Jim Jinkins' Doug. Now that Disney owns Jumbo Pictures, they own The Brand-Spanking New Doug, which is no longer brand-spanking new.

Recess is sort of an older version of Rugrats, complete with crude designs and point-of-view stories from six kids in the fourth grade. Not so coincidentally, the show's creative team happens to be the creators of Rugrats: Paul Germain and Joe Ansolabehere. Germain says, "If Rugrats was a show about seeing the world for the first time and exploring its wonders, then Recess is a show about the next stage of childhood — when you've seen the world and have to figure out how to survive in it."

HBO Animation's *Spicy City*, directed by Ralph Bakshi, is targeted towards adults. © 1997 HBO.

Pepper Ann is like a female version of Doug Funnie. She's a neurotic tomboy who is "too cool to be 12." The character was inspired by the real-life childhood memories of Sue Rose, who proposed the series first to Nickelodeon.

Don't be surprised when you notice cartoons are having more social sermons and educational tips than usual.

Now, in an effort to out-Fox the competition, ABC is enclosing Recess, Pepper Ann, and some "interstitial elements" within an umbrella format called One Saturday Morning. The network hopes a host and studio audience will keep viewers glued to the two-hour block. Programs won't begin on the half-hour, but will be staggered within the block — to keep competing networks guessing about how to counter program.

From 10:30 on, the rest of

the schedule is repeats of *Bugs Bunny & Tweety, The Jungle Book's Jungle Cubs,* the not-so *New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* and the live-action *Science Court. Jungle Cubs* and *Pooh* will also show on The Disney Channel. ABC's fall season begins September 6.

***KaBlam!*, Nickelodeon's prime time animation variety show, is hosted by two animated characters named Henry and June. ©**

Weekday Syndication/Disney-Kellogg's Alliance

What used to be "The Disney Afternoon" has been reduced to a 90-minute block sponsored by Kellogg's. Its season begins September 1.

Fifty-two new episodes of 101 Dalmatians will air daily in nationwide syndication, while 13 additional episodes will be broadcast on ABC.

Reruns of The Mighty Ducks will air Mondays and Tuesdays, while Quack Pack will air Wednesdays through Fridays. The ever-popular DuckTales, starring Scrooge McDuck, will air daily in the third half-hour slot — or whatever time period that's determined by the local television station.

Disney's Aladdin and The Lion King's Timon & Pumbaa move to The Disney Channel while Gargoyles disappears into limbo.

Bohbot Kids Network/Syndication

Weekday afternoons will be action-packed on stations subscribing to the Bohbot Kids Network, the largest independent syndication network. Reruns of The Mask and Sonic the Hedgehog are on tap, along with a new series and an updated version of an old favorite.

Mattel sponsors Extreme Dinosaurs, 52 episodes brought to you by DIC Entertainment. Basically, it's a band of dinosaurs who awaken in the modern age, just in time to combat an evil band of dinosaurs. Whew, what luck.

The Ghostbusters return in Extreme Ghostbusters, forty new episodes starring the next generation of spirit-fighters, produced by Columbia TriStar Television. It's been ten years since the original team cleared New York of its ghostly malcontents. But now, the supernatural has returned, and the city needs a new team of Ghostbusters. Egon and Janine quickly train four teenagers and arm them with the latest ghost-trapping technology. Slimer is also back, along with a friendly spectre named Gnat.

On weekends, Space Monkeys, Extreme Dinosaurs and The Mask will air.

A new series, Pocket Dragon Adventures, features the cuddly little dragons created by renowned artist Real Musgrave. Twenty-six half-hours have been written by veteran animation scribes Marv Wolfman and Craig Miller. The show will ultimately be stripped to air six days a week for one month.

The Disney Channel

Nelvana Limited produces Rolie Polie Olie, a robot boy who lives in a magical mechanical world. It's a CGI-series with three seven-minute episodes that demonstrate "positive family and social relationships." Children's book author William Joyce is the show's creator.

PB&J comes from Jumbo Pictures, and is about three playful young otters named Peanut, Baby Butter and Jelly, who live in a houseboat on Lake Hoohaw. The show encourages creative problem solving and using imagination. Time slots for these 1998 series have yet to be announced.

Animated repeats come from Chip 'n' Dale's Rescue Rangers, Katie and Orbie, The Little Mermaid, Madeline (from DIC, now owned by Disney), Mickey's Mouse Tracks, The New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh, Timon & Pumbaa and Aladdin.

PBS

In October, Arthur, said to be PBS's most popular children's series after Barney & Friends, begins a second season with ten new shows, adding to 30 repeat episodes. Fred Rogers makes a special animated appearance in one of the episodes.

For television animation, this will be an especially pivotal year.

HBO

The latest network to own its own studio, HBO is venturing into a market largely untouched by any of its rivals: adult animation. Supervising director Eric Radomski has helmed six episodes of both Ralph Bakshi's Spicy City and Spawn. With two more seasons of Spawn in production, plus developing his own properties for the network, he's a busy man and a hot commodity.

Nickelodeon

Rugrats is back by popular demand with a sixth season, which premieres August 23, showing

Saturdays at 8:00 p.m. There's also a Thanksgiving special, a direct-to-video, plus, a motion picture in the works.

Hey, Arnold!, yet another adolescent angst comedy, premieres its second season on September 22, Mondays and Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m.

An eclectic mix of cartoon shorts airs on *KaBlam!*, which has its second season premiere September 26, Fridays at 8:00 p.m.

Comedy Central's outrageous new animated series, *South Park*, breaks new ground in adult animation. © Comedy Central.

MTV

Daria's success on MTV has prompted a second season order of 26 episodes, which begin airing early next year, totaling 39 episodes. The show airs regularly on Mondays at 10:30 p.m. *Aeon Flux* and of course, *Beavis and Butt-Head* will continue to air. MTV will also serve up *Cartoon Sushi*, a series that will show animated short films produced by independent animators like John R. Dilworth.

Comedy Central

South Park is a show with cheap cutout animation and a disgusting sense of humor. It features a quartet of foul-mouthed third graders who take on weird happenings in their small Colorado town. It's based on the raunchy short, *The Spirit of Christmas*, created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone, who executive-produce the series along with Brian Graden. The series airs Wednesday nights at 10:00 beginning August 13 and is definitely not FCC-friendly!

The popular but cheaply animated *Dr. Katz: Professional Therapist* airs with new episodes Sunday nights at 10:00.

Cartoon Network

The Cartoon Network got a head start on the competition with three series spin-offs from the "What a Cartoon!/World Premiere Toon" program.

Thirteen episodes of *Johnny Bravo* began July 14, airing Mondays at 8:00 p.m., with repeats on Fridays at 8:00 p.m. Johnny Bravo is a blond, muscle-bound hunk with an eye always open for the chicks — and we're not talking about farm animals, baby! A series of episodes titled "Johnny Bravo Meets..." features animated celebrity appearances from the likes of Adam West, Michael Dorn, Tom Bosley, Mark Hamill, Donny Osmond, Jonathan Winters and Farrah Fawcett.

If you like Teats and Ass, *Cow & Chicken* is the show for you. Twenty-six episodes began July 15, with show times at 8:00 p.m. Tuesdays and 8:30 p.m. Fridays. It's a blend of *Ren & Stimpy* and *Baby Huey*, in which little sister Cow and big brother Chicken contend with The Red Guy (aka The Devil) in two seven-minute segments. In the third segment, *I Am Weasel*, the internationally famous genius, I.M. Weasel (voiced by *Star Trek's* Michael Dorn) is pitted against his jealous rival, I.R. Baboon, who sports a shiny red behind. Yes, bare buttocks are commonplace in these cartoons; such exposure is taboo on a commercial broadcast network.

The second season of *Dexter's Laboratory* began July 16, with show times at 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays and repeats at 9:00 p.m. on Fridays. Special mention must be made of the episode "Mock 5," a hilarious send-up of *Speed Racer* and for my money, one of the greatest shorts ever made.

The "What a Cartoon!" program will continue with 16 new shorts. The first two have been made by John Kricfalusi and star Ranger Smith of Jellystone Park. Yogi and Boo Boo are also along for the ride.

Space Ghost: Coast to Coast is also back for another 24 new episodes. This is the only late night talk show hosted by an irreverent superhero who dishes up many off-the-wall surprises.

And there you have it: the latest in animation entertainment ... and education. It'll be interesting to see if viewers tune in the new "FCC-friendly" shows. If viewers instead watch cartoons on cable networks and home video (Nickelodeon has already surpassed its network rivals in popularity), the decline in ratings may discourage the commercial broadcast networks altogether. They may abandon Saturday morning cartoons, as NBC and CBS already have. For television animation, this will be an especially pivotal year. The season is just beginning and far, far from over.

Saturday Morning Bonanza: The New Crop for the Kiddies

by Martha Day

It's the new fall Saturday morning broadcast television season, and I am currently working on the hardest task of the year — mapping out my plans for what I am going to watch on a typical Saturday morning.

While I technically have five choices for Saturday morning, I will be focusing on the three non-cable channels that still run animation — ABC, Kids' WB!, and Fox. Last year, I was glued to the WB! on Saturday mornings, but this year, there are refurbished lineups on Fox and ABC to consider.

***Space Goofs* tells the story of five alien roommates. © Gaumont Multimedia.**

8:00 a.m.

The choices are 101 Dalmatians on ABC, Bobby's World on Fox, and Channel Umptee-3 on Kids' WB!

More choices simply equals more of the same mediocrity this year.

101 Dalmatians is standard Disney fare - big-eyed, cute, and filled with all sorts of life lessons. In fact, it seems that everything that is on at 8:00 a.m. is cute and filled with all sorts of life lessons. I think I'll sleep until 8:30.

8:30 a.m.

Stickin' Around is on Fox and Men In Black is on Kids' WB! "Disney's One Saturday Morning" starts on ABC, and will include a mix of Brand Spanking New Doug, Recess and Pepper Ann, as well as education interstitials. The shows will start slightly off of the every half-hour formula and be presented under an umbrella format, complete with a host. For the sake of this discussion, however, I'll assume that each one is in a different half-hour slot.

Men in Black is simply the animated version of the movie. No messing with funny styles, no tampering with changing the jokes — it's all exactly the same as in the movie, and yet not quite as clever or funny. So, go see the movie and leave it at that. Stickin' Around has been on the air as interstitials. I sometimes wonder if it would be as interesting if not drawn in a stick figure style because that's the joke. It's not bad, but there is still dependable

***Pepper Ann*, a new star on ABC's Saturday morning line-up, is a character whose motto is "Too cool to be twelve." © Disney, All rights reserved.**

Doug. Who knows, maybe he'll have a dilemma this time and Patty Mayonnaise will help him solve it.

9:00 a.m.

An hour of new episodes of The New Batman/Superman Adventures air on Kids' WB!, possibly an episode of Pepper Ann on

***Recess*. © Disney. All Rights Reserved.**

***Toonsyvlvania*, now in production by DreamWorks Television Animation, will air on Kids' WB! starting in 1998. © 1997 DreamWorks L.L.C.**

ABC, and in October, Ned's Newt premieres on Fox.

Batman and Superman are always good bets, although I'll probably give Pepper Ann a look, if just for some surreal animation and (gasp!) a quirky female main character. Ned's Newt merely shows the effects of Ren and Stimpy on network television.

9:30 a.m.

The choices are Recess on ABC, Space Goofs (formerly Home to Rent) on Fox, and more Batman and Superman on Kids' WB!

Fox follows up with yet another Ren and Stimpy-influenced show. Space Goofs is basically France's tribute to Ren. Gaumont, the producers, were clever enough to see that Ren & Stimpy was not just about neuroses and gross-out jokes, but also about some pretty strange timing, posing, and reacting. They were also smart enough to hire R&S veterans. The show features five characters, roughly two imitation Rens, two semi-Stimpys, and a random throw-in, and then the same story over and over again of aliens chasing out unwanted tenants from the house. Sounds good to me.

Recess is another excellent piece of reference material for anyone wanting to write a paper on the effect of Nickelodeon's 1991 season on the Saturday morning animation of 1997. The creators are two of the guys from the original Rugrats, but it looks as though this time they didn't bring the funny writers along. Recess, in the process of trying to be relevant and clever, forgot to be interesting or funny. It has the "adults think this is funny" feel. It's also about the ugliest show I have ever seen. The style borrows from every other show on the air, but forgot to have it's own look. The characters are a multicultural group of kids that could only exist in a cartoon that is trying to satisfy FCC requirements. I'll watch Space Goofs, it's a better tribute.

10:00 a.m.

More "One Saturday Morning" on ABC or The Legend of Calamity Jane on Kids' WB!. Only the two choices because Fox goes to live-action with Goosebumps.

I am amazed to see another show with a woman as the lead character on Saturday morning! I will watch Calamity Jane, mainly out of curiosity.

10:30 a.m.

The competition gets tough. Pinky and the Brain on Kids' WB!, Sam and Max on Fox, and The Bugs Bunny and Tweety Show on ABC.

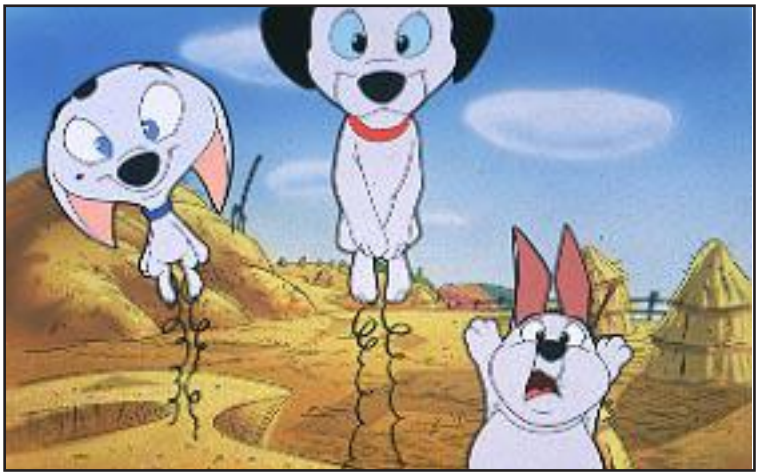
But the overall note is that most of these shows forgot to put the "funny" in...

Pinky and the Brain still remains one of the funniest shows, and I will continue to watch it, while I pray for it to return to prime time. Sam & Max is a show that I've been anticipating for years. I like the comic book. I like the video game, and I'll bet the show will be funny too. I'll tape it. When they both go into reruns, though, it's back to Bugs and Tweety, who remain the funniest, even years later.

11:00 a.m.

Life with Louie on Fox, Animaniacs on Kids WB!, and Jungle Cubs on ABC.

Hey, do the writers of Animaniacs split their writers' fees with the people who actually wrote the stuff they are parodying in the first place? Just wondering. It's still funny, nevertheless, so I will watch Animaniacs.



Fifty-two new episodes of *101 Dalmatians: The Series* will air daily in nationwide syndication, while 13 additional episodes will be broadcast on ABC's Saturday morning line-up. © Disney. All Rights Reserved.

***Dexter's Laboratory* started its new season this summer on Cartoon Network. © Cartoon Network.**

11.30 a.m.

The New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh on ABC, *X-Men* on Fox, and *The Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries,* on Kids' WB!

The Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries is better than you'd think. But CBS is set to weigh in with *The Weird Al Show,* and that could be worth checking out, even though it is predominately live-action.

12:00 noon.

Science Court on ABC. Despite sounding about as much fun as chemistry lab, this may have potential. It's from the creators of *Dr. Katz,* and my guess is that if you can stand the Squigglevision, this could be fun. Enough fun to make you forget that your daily dose of educational programming is being heaped on.

We'll have to wait until 1998 for *Steven Spielberg Presents Toonsylvania.* Too bad. It will be interesting to see DreamWorks TV Animation in action.

Hmmm ... So, What Do I Think?

The good news is that Saturday morning is no longer the Jim Carrey Cartoon Festival. But the bad news is that it's still Saturday morning animation. More choices simply equals more of the same mediocrity this year.

For some of the shows, the attempt to be different and relevant has even made the shows the same as those that are on other channels. We are starting to see just a few too many fond paeans to youth all over the airwaves, and they are becoming repetitive. Thus, there are a lot of new programs, but nothing really new. Nickelodeon was successful in 1991 because they made shows that were different, and other show creators will probably have more success if they follow the lead of making shows that are unique, not replications of past successful shows.

If you are an animation fan, what can you do? Be thankful that not all animation is on Saturday mornings.

In addition, the trend for the rest of the industry outside of Saturday network mornings is that programs are skewing a little older. Shows on Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon skew towards the 8-12 set whereas the current batch of Saturday morning shows still skew toward the 5-8 age group. That's not a problem, as there are still plenty of five to eight-year-olds. Yet if viewers are used to shows seeming a little sharper and edgier, they may find some of these network shows a little bland.

Whatever the age skew, the issue really is, "Is the show entertaining, and will it get and keep viewers?" With the FCC requiring educational television for children viewers, most of the shows have some pro-social lessons, either hidden or glaring. But the overall note is that most of these shows forgot to put the "funny" in, and since they are supposed to be funny on some level, that's not a good thing.

If you are an animation fan, what can you do? Be thankful that not all animation is on Saturday mornings. There are two major trends that will save us - funny cable animation and animation for adults. Thanks to cable, there is animation all over the schedule. Nickelodeon has finally premiered new episodes of *Rugrats.* Cartoon Network is running funny new episodes of *Cow & Chicken, Johnny Bravo,* and *Dexter's Laboratory.* There is also a new round of "sitcom" animation with *Daria* and *King of the Hill.* On top of that, cable's version of animation for adults just keeps getting stranger and stranger, with shows such as *South Park, Spawn,* and *Spicy City.*

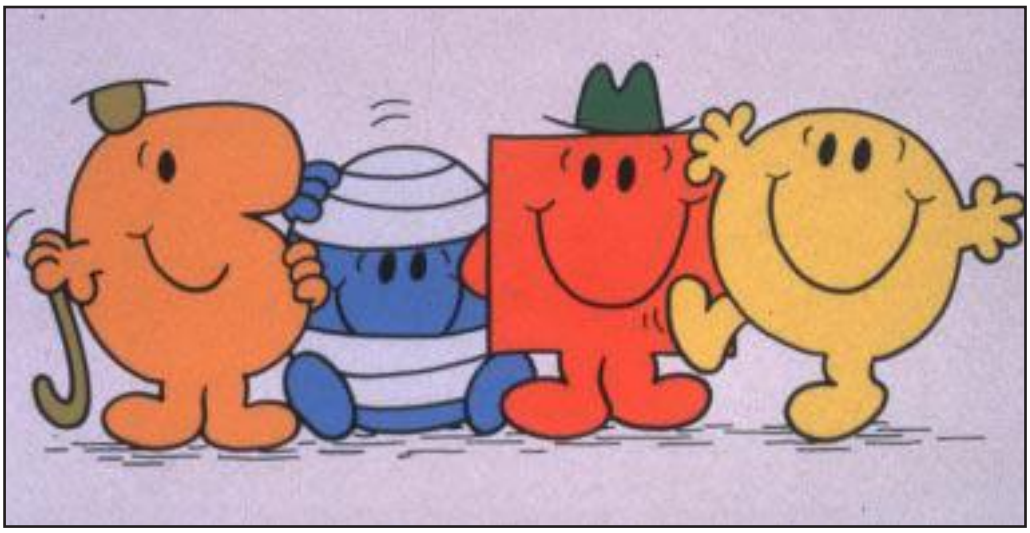
Besides, if I stay up late enough on Friday night to watch *Spawn,* I may sleep through Saturday morning anyway.

Martha Day works in the television animation industry. In her spare time, she watches far too much television.

Mushrooms After the Rain: France's Children's Channels

by Marie-Agnès Bruneau

With the advent of satellite television, thematic channels have multiplied in France, like mushrooms after the rain. One of the favorite targets of these new outlets is children who can now have access, according to which cable or satellite bouquet they receive, to up to five channels entirely devoted to them. Six by November! Why, just six months ago, they could barely receive two. Next to veteran Canal J, and Cartoon Network, which was only carried on satellite, are now AB Cartoon, Teletoon, Disney Channel France, and soon Fox Kids.



Summit Media Group's *Mr. Men* is licensed to air on France 3. © Summit Media Group.

The new channels have been either launched by the digital satellite networks, referred to as bouquets in France, or independently by American channels who are attracted by the new broadcasting opportunities. Children channels are considered as appealing as cinema channels. In the last few months, France has had three competing digital platforms launched. Surprisingly, while cable never really took off, with only 1.5 million subscribers to date, DTH (direct to home satellite) went quickly over expectations with nearly 600,000 digital subscribers registered in only six short months. Sure, the amazing advertising campaigns that have accompanied these launches has helped. In fact, the competition has stimulated the market. Ten years ago, cable was handicapped by the launch of a cinema and sports pay-television, Canal +, who now has over 4 million subscribers.

With the advent of satellite television, thematic channels have multiplied in France, like mushrooms after the rain.

CanalSatellite - The Digital Leader

Of the three digital bouquets, CanalSatellite, controlled by Canal +, shot first. CanalSatellite was already an existing satellite platform, but was analog, carrying only the thematic channels that one could find on cable. The digital service was launched in April 1996 with additional channels, interactive services, multiplexing, of Canal + most notably, and pay per view, making a total of 40 channels. Already carrying Canal J, as well as Cartoon Network, CanalSatellite Numerique was less in need than the other bouquets to create a children's channel. But aiming to present the best and widest reaching offer, the service worked out exclusive satellite carriage deals, as has been achieved with Disney Channel France. CanalSatellite is to date the leading platform with 440,000 digital subscribers (plus 130,000 using the older analog technology).

A Strong Newcomer, TPS

Not wanting Canal + to have the monopoly of pay television in France, terrestrial broadcasters TF1, France 2, France 3, and M6 have associated to create TPS (Television Par Satellite), together with Lyonnaise des Eaux and CLT, who are also both shareholders of M6, and France Telecom, which is also acting as a cable operator. TPS was launched in December 1996. It bet on the fact that it carries the terrestrial broadcasters' programming,

and not CanalSatellite, which is not received well in all parts of France. The digital satellite platforms predominantly target small towns where reception is generally less good. TPS also carries the thematic channels developed by its shareholders and to complete its offerings launched cinema channels and ... Teletoon. Supported by a strong ad campaign, which ran on all of its powerful terrestrial partners, TPS started strong with 170,000 subscribers by June 1997 which was well over expectations.

Reboot **is licensed to air on both Canal + and France 2. © Alliance/ Mainframe Entertainment.**

AB Sat: The Outsider

The outsider has been AB Sat. It has been launched by leading independent French producer and distributor, AB. For years the company made a name, and high profits, by producing TF1's children's shows and successful long-running youth sitcoms. When the launch of AB Sat established a competition with TPS, their already sensitive relationship with TF1, a shareholder of TPS, became worse. In fact, TF1 has canceled all of AB's children's shows for September. Sure of its Frs 1 billion yearly turnover and its prominent catalogue, AB went to the NY Stock Exchange to finance its bouquet where it received Frs 888.9 million. AB Sat's concept is totally different than the previous two: it is cheap. Whereas the others start at around Frs 100 per month, AB starts at Frs 40 per month which includes access to all 18 new niche channels with themes ranging from action to romance to erotic, to ... cartoons. Unable to enjoy the same megaforce financial backing as its two competitors, AB Sat has not yet benefited from a consistent launch campaign, and its subscribership is low with only 11,000 by the end of June. AB Sat does not have, however, such a high break-even level, needing only 400,000 subscribers compared to at least twice that for the others. Because of their concept, the AB channels are not running after fresh programming. They rely heavily on AB's existing catalogue. 90% of AB Cartoon's programming comes from its' library (AB handles 15,000 animated episodes) and as for the rest, the AB channels are known as the ones paying the lowest acquisition prices. AB Cartoon's concept is to run the "oldies but goodies" animated series during the day and anime at night. Though the budget is not unveiled, it is said to be in the Frs 20 million bracket.

Lapitch the Little Shoemaker **is licensed to air on TF1. © Pro Sieben.**

Though all of these channels rely mainly on their shareholders' catalogues and have relatively small budgets (Frs 30/60 million), they need to secure a number of subscribers that digital platforms do not seem to be able to offer alone. Prior to convincing kids to watch them, they have to first convince cable operators to carry them. A difficult crusade since, even if they are currently launching into digital, the cable networks are still all analog and can't add a channel without taking one off.

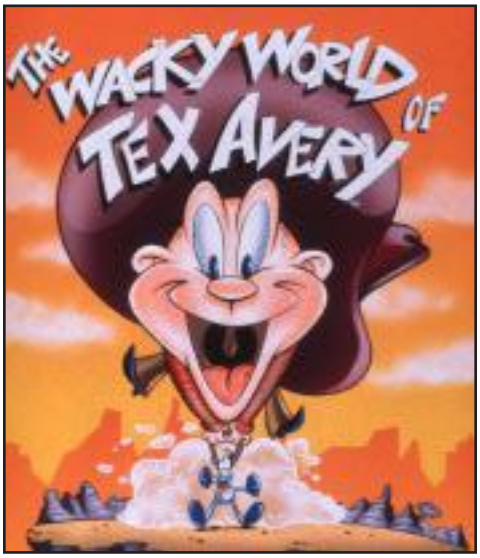
Disney, A Strong Label

Disney Channel France has for its part managed to get access to most of the cable systems thanks to its strong label. Operators figured they could benefit from Disney's image and that it would help boost subscriptions. The Disney Channel is the only kids' channel to have positioned itself as pay TV. They too are betting on its strong label, powerful in not only the kids' minds, but also in the ones who have the wallet, the parents. It tries to establish itself as a French channel, appealing to families, and perfect for baby-sitting. Launched in March, the first figures have proved far bet-

ter than expected, with 200,000 subscribers registered by the end of June. This was their goal for the end of one year. However, these results are to be taken prudently. How much extra will people want to spend when they have access to an increasing number of children's channels? Disney Channel's subscription rate is 35 francs per month. Most of Disney Channel's current subscribers - 170,000 - come from CanalSatellite, whose first subscribers, attracted by novelty, seem at this point to be in the mood to take a quasi complete service. 70% also subscribe to Canal +. The Disney Channel has only achieved 30,000 subscribers from cable to date. Disney's animated features are a good asset. However, their broadcast is rare, probably so as to not hurt their healthy home video revenues. Disney programming only makes up 50% of the channel's schedule, and being structured as a French channel it has to meet certain quotas. Even if they have negotiated a progressive deal with the regulatory body CSA*, the channel only has to air French programs 30% of the time for this year. Obtaining French shows is currently a headache, especially in the children's programming field. Not only because of increasing concentration of catalogues, but also because, TF1, France 3 and M6 are the biggest commissioners of animated series and of course, the cable and satellite rights often go to ... Teletoon. To enter the market, The Disney Channel practices higher acquisition prices and intends to do pre-acquisitions and a few co-productions to get fresh product. In order to succeed, the channel will have to prove it is offering an especially worthy product; one that people will want to pay for and renew.

The Cable Struggle

To get access to the cable networks is not so easy for the other newcomers, especially when they are linked with a digital platform. The three main cable operators are all linked with one of the bouquets, which can lead to conflicts of interest. Lyonnaise des Eaux (Paris, among others) and France Telecom have shares in TPS. Generale des Eaux has interests in CanalSatellite. This is not the only problem these channels are facing.



The Wacky World of Tex Avery, **produced by DIC Entertainment's appropriately named French studio, Le Studio Tex. © DIC Entertainment.**

Keeping Teletoon in Second Place

Thanks to its recent pick-up on Lyonnaise des Eaux's cable networks, TPS' Teletoon is the second most widely broadcast children's channel. While still well after Canal J, TPS has 529,000 subscribers to date. "We are having discussions with the other cable operators but they are not easy," says Francois Deplank, who heads Teletoon. Besides the conflict of interest with Generale des Eaux, a shareholder of competing bouquets, the talks with the other operators, including its own shareholder France Telecom, are not evident. "With the multiplication of channels they tend to go toward a segmented offer (children, sports, etc.) on option (people pay extra for additional channels for which they 'option'), putting the different bouquets in competition, which is not in our interest." Deplank would prefer to be offered as part of the basic channels which are those that are fed into every cable home without additional charges. "We have more chances to gain new subscribers through TPS than with the cable networks!" The financial arrangements with cable operators vary from case to case, but the average price that Teletoon gleans is 2F per month per subscriber as part of the basic service, and 3.5 F or more when on option.

Teletoon needs 1.1 million subscribers to break even. Its current budget is Frs 30 million "but is to climb to Frs 50/60 million in three years," adds Deplank. 30% of its programming comes from TF1, 30% from France 3, and 10% from M6. The rest is acquired. One-third of the channel's current budget goes to programs and that will climb to 50% in three years. In order to reinforce its identity, the channel intends to do a few co-productions of short animated series and specials, which will be different from what its broadcasting shareholders commission.

Surprisingly, DTH went quickly over expectations with nearly 600,000 digital subscribers registered in only six short months.

Its' concept is 100% cartoons as is one of its main upcoming competitors the Cartoon Network. The

Turner channel was not conventioned by the CSA until now, and as a result, could barely have access to the French cable networks. CSA has recently announced, however, that according to European regulation, if Cartoon Network is sanctioned in the country from which it airs (UK), they can no longer be refused. Deplank is confident though. "We had the example of a small cable system in Alsace (French border) who stopped running Cartoon Network to carry us instead. They are quite happy about it. Cartoon Network still runs half of its programming in English, and French kids usually learn to speak French before English!"

Making a Space? Fox Kids

As if this was not enough, a new player is coming to the game as of November 15 - Fox Kids. At this point, they are announced on CanalSatellite. "We are currently meeting everybody and we have a good feedback concerning our concept," says Benoit Runel, who heads the new French American-backed channel. Its' break even point is at 1.8 million subscibers. 75% of its programming comes from Fox and Saban, and includes series such as The Power Rangers. Saban has an animation production subsidiary in France which is one of the more active. Though not available yet as it is still held by AB, Saban also acquired the prominent C&D French catalogue. Fox Kids' positions itself, compared to Canal J, as an "entertaining" channel, while Canal J aims to educate and inform children. Fox's target focuses on children from 2 to 12 years-old but has dedicated slots per age group.

Canal J and Original Programming

With this increasing competition how will Canal J maintain its leadership? Asked six months ago, Eve Baron, head of programs, was quite confident, "I don't think it's 'competition.' The channels are positioning themselves differently. Disney targets a family audience. Teletoon runs only animation. The budgets of most of these channels are very low and they don't do any original programming. They know what it costs! For our part, we are the only channel offering a full range of programs and topics to children. We are 11 years old. We dedicate Frs 65 million to programs per year, 90% being put into first run shows. Frs 45 million go to in-house production, with a two-hour daily live show among others, and co-productions." At this point, Canal J seems to have a considerable advance, being carried by all cable systems plus CanalSatellite which helps it enjoy a healthy 1.9 million subscribers. The channel made a consistent Frs 120 million turnover in 1996, including Frs 30 million from advertising and Frs 87 million from subscriptions. To counter the attack, the channel is further boosting its schedule, reinforcing what makes it special: original programming. Canal J is to introduce a news show for kids this fall, among others.

Gaumont Multimedia's *Sky Dancers* is licensed to air on France 3. © Gaumont Multimedia.

The three main cable operators are all linked with one of the bouquets, which can lead to conflicts of interest.

As we've seen, the future remains full of uncertainties for all of these channels and depends on so many factors such as their financial reserves, the development of DTH, their ability to seduce cable operators, and, lastly but definitely not least, the kids. Competition is going to grow tougher for sure. In addition, terrestrial broadcasters have muscled up their children's programs; France 3 is dedicating 1,300 hours per year, TF1 1,000 and so on. The number of hours children watch television has tended to decrease these past years due to competition from video games and computers. Nothing proves that a greater television offering will make it increase again. Let's hope quality will make the difference.

Marie-Agnès Bruneau has been writing about the French television business since 1984. For four years she ran Mediaspheres, *a weekly French television trade magazine. She is currently a freelance writer, living in Paris, who regularly contributes to FT Media and Telecom's publications.*

*Note: What Is The CSA?

LE CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'AUDIOVISUEL (CSA) (French Audiovisual Council) is a regulation authority, composed of 9 "wise" members. One third of the board members are nominated every 2 years by the President of France, the Senate President and National Assembly President.

Among other activities, the CSA controls the application of the law for the protection of minors. To that end, the CSA has created a new plan to establish program ratings and on-screen information, in cooperation with broadcasters and viewer associations. This plan, effective since November, 1996, applies to national territorial networks and the Canal + cable network.

This initiative is in response to a need for greater broadcaster responsibility and is aimed at giving parents the tools they need to determine what is appropriate for their children, thanks to clear, standardized on-screen symbols. The programs are divided into categories depending on the degree of violence depicted in them. The categories go from Category 1 "general public" to Category 5 "pornographic or extremely violent works." Programs in Category 1 show no on-screen symbol. Programs in Category 5 are forbidden on terrestrial networks. For other categories, on-screen symbols are obligatory and they have time slot restrictions.

Guarantor for freedom of communication, the CSA only takes action a posteriori. They cannot block a program from airing. After an offense, the CSA calls for sanctions in the form of fines or on-screen announcements.

The CSA also controls the diffusion of French language within programs. If programs are from other countries, they need to be dubbed or aired with French subtitles.

*In 1996, animation programs represented 2,823 hours, which is 54 % of the Children and Youth Programs. 54% of the animated programs were from Europe, 34% from the U.S., and 8% from Japan. ***

According to the European Community directive "Television without frontiers," European networks can broadcast in all EEC member countries but are dependent on the laws applicable in their country of origin. For instance, Cartoon Network is dependent on ITC in Great Britain. Disney Channel France has a special arrangement regarding quotas, like other similar channels. Within 5 years from their start date, they will need to go from 30% to 40% French speaking programs, as is standard for all cable networks in France.

Info compiled from CSA information booklet by Annick Teninge.

*** numbers are for programs on TF1, France2, France 3, La Cinquieme, M6 and Canal +. Source: CSA, Program Department.*

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The Korean Animation Explosion

By Milt Vallas

Over the last ten years the animation industry in South Korea has grown beyond what had to have been the wildest dreams of its early pioneers. Today, South Korea is undoubtedly the largest supplier of television animation in the world. Industry estimates are not always precise, but no one would argue that in peak production years the country's production houses can turn out over a thousand half-hour (22 minute) episodes. While some may argue about the quality of overseas animation, no one has ever turned out the quantity of work to compare to this Asian dynamo. How did this all come about and how did the Korean animation industry grow into this 5,000 pound gorilla? What does the future look like for this high flying industry? Let's see.

In the Beginning...

Exactly how this all started depends, like many things, on who you ask. In 1960 two men, Mr. Dong Heon Shin and Mr. Chung produced a 6-minute animated short for AFKN (Armed Forces Korean Network) titled I am Water. This small educational film might be called the Genesis of Korean Animation.

The Koreans were the New Yorkers of Asia.

In the following years some work came into the country from Japan but this was almost exclusively ink and paint work. One of the early companies working with Japan was TBC, a broadcasting company which no longer exists. TBC is credited with performing assistant animation on a show titled Golden Bat.

In 1968 a company, International Art Production, began re-doing a series of single reel shows featuring classic animation characters such as Betty Boop, Krazy Kat, Felix and even Porky Pig. These old theatrical shorts were being copied frame by frame and being reproduced in color. This company was run by Mr. Jeong Yoon Song and Mr. Tayk Kim.

Several years later in 1973, the same Mr. Kim would hook up with Steve Hahn and open Dong Seo Animation. Dong Seo is important because it will morph into HanHo which will become a major player in the formative years of Korean animation. However, in 1973, Korean animation was still just beginning and mostly limited to ink and paint work from Japan. Dong Seo Animation broke ground by joining up with Ralph Bakshi and supplying in-between animation on

HanHo Studio in Seoul, one of the first animation studios in Korea, today offers both traditional and digital ink and paint services. Photos courtesy of HanHo Company Ltd.

An animator at AKOM studio.

features *War Wizards* and *Hey Good Looking*.

In the early years, the Korean animation industry was a bit rough and tumble. The Korean business culture was not always well understood by Westerners and in turn, Korean producers did not always understand their Western clients. Steve Hahn came to be seen by many as the epitome of the tough Korean producer. Hahn's style was more direct and confrontational than other studios in the region, such as those in Taiwan or Japan, where saving face and avoidance of open conflict was a more natural way of dealing with problems. The Koreans were the New Yorkers of Asia. They worked hard, played hard and didn't pull any punches both literally and figuratively. When it came to face, Korean style was more *in your face*. They fought equally among themselves with partnerships quickly forming, exploding apart and reforming all over Seoul. This highly competitive and volatile business atmosphere began to form in 1979-80 when Steve Hahn opened his new company, MiHahn. He received work from Ruby-Spears on their show *Plastic Man*. This work came to him with the help of Jerry Smith, who was trusted by Joe Ruby and Ken Spears. Smith had been sent to Taiwan by Bill Hanna in 1978 to help James Wang set up Cuckoos Nest, but, in what would become a reoccurring theme, he had a falling out there and so was ready to try a new start up in 1980 with Steve Hahn in South Korea.

At the same time, Nelson Shin, another key figure in the story, was starting out and began by making a deal with Depatie-Freleng to bring six half-hours of a show they were producing with The Netherlands to Korea. The show was titled *Dr. Snuggle*. In 1979, Nelson also brought a Bugs Bunny special for Depatie-Freeling to Korea. Nelson Shin believes he brought the first full show (animation through camera) to Seoul. Others feel Steve Hahn or the late Jerry Smith was first. All in all, it doesn't really matter, as they were all pioneers and helped to get the industry started.

By 1985, the animation industry had become firmly established in Seoul. Jerry Smith had split with Steve Hahn, formed his own company, Take One, closed it and then left the country. Mr. Tayk Kim had left Dong Seo and started his own company called Pion Animation and Nelson Shin was opening a new studio, AKOM, which would eventually become the largest in Korea. Steve Hahn was about to lose his studio, then HanHo, by producing *Starchaser*, a 3-D theatrical film which would flop and result in his financial backers taking over his studio.

Nelson Shin, head of AKOM Studio, president of ASIFA Korea, and publisher of the industry magazine *Animatoon*, would like to see Koreans more involved in the creation of programs.

If there is a marked beginning to Korea's golden period, it had to be in the mid to late Eighties when animation studios began popping up all over Seoul; Daiwon, Sei Young, AKOM and Saerom, to name a few, were all formed during this period.

How Do They Do It?

To start with, everyone works very hard. Secondly, the studios in Seoul, and there are well over sixty studios listed there alone, have developed a system that relies upon a strong cottage industry for many phases of production. Anywhere from ink and paint to camera, there's someone out there who wants to sub-contract your work if you'll give it to them. Also, almost everyone freelances, or moonlights if you like, and many studios lay off work like a bookie lays off bets when he gets more action than he can handle. A studio may be producing three separate series at the same time and not even have a layout department in house; it will all be freelanced out.

While this might be undesirable for an overseas supervisor who wants to see his work come back to him in a smooth flow, this system helps the studios in that it provides decentralized micromanagement within each phase of production supplied by each contractor, not dissimilar from the way Boeing manufactures its airplane. The larger studios producing the pricey shows maintain full in-studio departments but even they will avail themselves to freelance help when they need it. The bottom line is that over the past fifteen years, Seoul has developed a large and capable work force and a system in which their production efforts can be max-

imized when needed and downsized when slow.

Overseas Supervisors

For those not familiar with the term, this refers to the client's representative, sent by the client, and normally at his expense, to work within the contracting studio. This person most often is an artist (layout, animator, designer or even a director), but they could also be a production manager type. The first Westerners who went over to Asia were all very versatile artists who worked with the local staff as instructors as much as client watchdogs. What the Korean animators didn't know is that these people taught them. American animation employed and still employs, different techniques, style and timing than Japanese animation. These early supervisors helped the studios to speed up the learning curve, enabling them to understand quickly how to produce acceptable work for the Western market.

Background artists at HanHo Studio. Photo courtesy of HanHo Company Ltd.

Over the past fifteen years, Seoul has developed a large and capable work force and a system in which their production efforts can be maximized when needed and downsized when slow.

The Business Men

Another interesting phenomenon of the Korean animation industry is the relatively large number of studio owners who have no particular interest in animation other than as an investment. These are men and women who have acquired their companies as business enterprises but have no more attachment to their studios than to their plumbing supply house or import/export companies. These business owners often buy into animation studios that need a cash infusion and, more often than not, end up taking over the company from its original owner.

There has also been a trend to form studio groups with one large studio taking smaller studios under its wing and presenting the group as one large holding. A most recent example of this was the Rainbow Animation Studio group (more recently renamed to Galaxy World, Inc.) which was put together by Ted Choi, a Korean business man who lives in Los Angeles and came from the garment business. This system is simply an extension of subcontracting but with the logical twist of doing it openly and telling the client that you own/have control of the smaller studios doing their work. The only problem is that often times, the *group* is made up of totally separate business entities, with completely different agendas, and the studio doing your work is not being paid a fee that will allow them to produce a solid show. The group is only held together by the main studio's ability to supply everyone shows at a reasonable fee. After a while, inevitably, the small studios grow unhappy with the large studio from which they receive work. The large studio naturally skims a percentage of the client's fees and the studio doing the work feels unappreciated and underpaid. Also, if the show is successful, the large studio takes the bows and egos can be fragile things.

The New Studios and the '90s Boom

Like all businesses, success breeds competition, and there is nowhere more competitive when it comes to business than Asia. The '90s saw a rash of new studios enter the scene.

Disney Television brought its shows to a new, bright and aggressive studio called Sun Woo. In 1991, Michael Webster, who was then in charge of production for Disney Television Animation, told me that Sun Woo was producing some of the best work he had ever seen and that Disney was so impressed with the quality, they were putting them under an exclusive contract. This didn't work out for long, as Disney wanted exclusivity and Sun Woo wasn't prepared to be tied down in such a growing market.

Rough Draft Korea (RDK) started by doing an odd little show called *Ren and Stimpy* and soon were being sought after as a highly creative studio capable of producing the off-the-wall type productions that Klasky-Csupo and Nickelodeon were developing as their benchmarks.

Plus One, Koko (formerly Dong Yang), a revitalized Saerom

and Daiwon, along with an ever-expanding AKOM, led the charge into the Nineties with Korea capturing up to 30% of the world market in animation production. From 1990 to 1996 the business has grown with last year reaching an all time high. AKOM alone reported a production run of 189 shows for the year. The little industry that started so quietly in 1968 with an educational film has grown into a major industry which by 1996 probably came close to grossing $120 million US.

The little industry that started so quietly in 1968 with an educational film has grown into a major industry which by 1996 probably came close to grossing $120 million U.S.

So What's Next?

Building a market and keeping it are two different things. It doesn't take a Wharton school grad to understand that if the demand for new animated programming slows, so does the industry that produces the shows. 1997 is a definite down tick from 1996, but as 1997 was such a record year, the comparison may be unfair. There is still a healthy number of shows being produced throughout Asia and certainly a good number of these are in South Korea. The question that every studio owner must ask is how long will the good times roll?

At the end of last year, a friend who is the head of production for a major studio went to Korea to look for a production house to place a new series that was to start this year. Her company is not known for having high budgets, but the new project was well-funded, so she thought she would interview a few high end studios, who she hadn't been able to use before. When she arrived in Seoul her appointments were rather brusquely canceled. She was told it would be a waste of time for her to go to the studios as she couldn't afford them. "I couldn't believe how arrogant they were," she told me. This year both studios would be honored to bid on her work.

I asked Nelson Shin about what he saw in the future for AKOM and the industry in general. His response was guarded but generally optimistic. Nelson feels that the industry is still in excellent shape but he does understand that not all years will be banner ones like 1996. Nelson is one of the founders. He has seen bad times before and knows that the industry can turn south rather quickly. However, he feels confident in his own ability to bring work into AKOM and keep his staff busy. He also feels that maintaining a high quality standard and a good reputation will help the strong studios survive through the off-years.

A layout artist at Galaxy World animation studio (formerly Rainbow Animation). Photo courtesy of Galaxy World.

I also discussed the popularity of animation in Seoul with Tayk Kim. He pointed out that there were now five different animation festivals being held in Seoul this year alone. Mr. Kim, like Nelson Shin, is optimistic but also cautious. It seems that all of the producers I have talked with feel that they need to find a way to develop strong properties in which they can share long term revenues. This is not easy, as we all know. The Koreans seem to be exploring different avenues. Animation houses are trying to link up with post-production houses in order to offer Western producers a fuller package that can help shows with tight budgets. Korean layout and storyboard artists have set up small production units in Los Angeles which bid on shows as an entire package, again trying to present themselves as attractively as possible.

The question that every studio owner must ask is, how long will the good times roll?

Korean television, KBS 1 and 2, MBC and SBS, cannot pay for quality original programming. Sometimes a Korean studio will take a Korean broadcast license on a Western show as part of their fee, however, the value is not as great as the discount they offer. The Korean market is simply too small for the broadcasters to cough up a substantial amount of dollars. These "co-production" deals are often no more than sales gimmicks offered to make the client feel that the studio has a vested interest in the show, and will favor it in production over the other shows simultaneously going through the studio. Most often this is not true and the discount or back end position that the studio takes is worth little or nothing to them in reality. The catch here is that the studio has promised to provide a pro-

As more U.S. productions are being produced electronically, the Korean studios are responding by expanding their digital facilities.

Photo courtesy of Galaxy World.

Photo courtesy of HanHo Company Ltd.

duction service at a certain level of quality and to accept a lesser payment than they would normally charge for that service. Seemingly, the studio takes an ownership position in the show in proportion to the difference in services provided and lesser payment received. The rub for the client is that the studio may elect to produce the show at the exact same level of quality as the payment they've received; not at the higher level promised.

Photo courtesy of AKOM.

Some producers like Nelson Shin are encouraging young artistic staff members to try to develop the next *Aeon Flux* property as Korean designer Peter Chung did. They know that until they can demand a slice of the pie that they bake for the Western producers, they will continue to deal with the peaks and valleys of subcontracting. Shin, who is President of Korea's ASIFA chapter, believes that there is a great deal of talent in Korea that is still untapped. He would like to see Koreans more involved in the creation of programs but he understands that the main foundation of his industry is in the subcontracting domain.

One other note, North Korea has joined the South in the animation industry. SEK is a state owned and operated animation studio in North Korea with a staff of 500 people. We haven't heard too much about this company in the U.S. up until now, and we couldn't do business with them legally, but the French can and do. Currently this studio is producing 26 half-hours a year at a very competitive price for European producers. I suspect that it may not be long before political differences are put aside and business interests are addressed between the two Koreas.

Closing Thoughts

It seems that Korean animation is in the same or better position than U.S. animation. As long as someone is buying new television shows, Korea will continue to be called upon to produce them. The Korean producers also have Europe to look to for work, and potentially interesting relationships, should the U.S. and Canadian market slow up. After 30 years in this business, I've learned that nothing stays the same, but I think the Korean industry is still very strong and most importantly, flexible enough to weather a few off-years should they come along.

Milt Vallas is an independent producer who is known as a specialist in overseas animation production

The Cost of Eyeballs: Advertising Dollars & TV

by Buzz Potamkin

FBI Warning

What follows is a decidedly personal look at the relationship between advertising and television animation in the U.S. Where it is now, how it got there, some thoughts on where it's going, and how we can all thank Ronnie Reagan for where we are today, although not necessarily in that order. Advertising's relationship with TV animation is symbiotic; some may even call it a morbid dependency: love and hate equally mixed, but the need for each other approaching an addict's craving. You've been warned.

Where It Is Now

Television animation as we knew it has changed so completely that it is no longer recognizable as the medium it was as recently as earlier this decade. We've all seen the statistics, best summed up by one simple fact: available weekly national timeslots for TV animation have increased by a factor of nearly 10 since 1980. (Approximately 75 to over 600.) Remember though, that's for available timeslots, most of which are not filled with your latest production; in fact, the overwhelming majority of what's on is a repeat. Nevertheless, there is substantial production of new material to fill these timeslots.

Those of us who ceaselessly toil in the field of animation know all too well that the name of the game is TV. There may be big bucks over the fence in the feature pasture, but the total output pales in comparison to TV in all its forms: broadcast, cable, home video and - it really is TV to the audience - the 'net. And, with the exception of most home video, this veritable feast of cartoons is brought to the tube courtesy of advertisers - those whose appetite for young eyeballs seems insatiable, one bound to take animation to yet new heights of popularity.

Well, folks, it wasn't always this way, and it wasn't that long ago that those of us old enough to remember were bemoaning the slow, painful death of the animation industry. There are a few left from that lean generation of animation (myself included), those who were so crazy that we went headlong into the breach in the '70s while those around us fled to safer and more secure futures in book illustration, greeting card design, live action film, or, in at least one case, baggage handling at JFK. How did an industry left for dead in the '70s manage to fight its way back, to a scale of work unprecedented in its history? First, let's put aside all the deconstructivist theories about the audience changing - that an audience raised on cartoons somehow made it possible for animation to rise phoenix-like from the ashes and become acceptable as grown-up entertainment. The previous two generations were raised on the same diet, perhaps even richer, in the movie palaces of the '30s, '40s and '50s. Yet they fomented no renaissance. So, what happened this time?

Advertisers rarely lag too far behind current market conditions.

History in a Nutshell

To understand better this phenomenon, we need to plunge deep into the past, at least as far back as the '60s. If you were born after 1960, you probably aren't aware that there was no large television animation industry in the '50s. Sure, there are a few old favorites and oddities, and Hanna-Barbera did start near the end, but there was no market in the sense of what developed over the following decades. The whole idea of the Saturday Morning animation ghetto was yet to be born, and it only came about because of a convergence of several forces.

Most importantly, Bill Hanna developed The System: a means by which great amounts of footage could be generated over a short period of time at a reasonable cost. TV cartoons could not have succeeded without The System, period. Say what you like about the quality of the product, but The System changed forever the manufacture of animation, and allowed a cottage industry to enter the larger market. The networks could order in one season more animation than had been made industrywide in the entire decade of the '30s, and have it delivered ready to air within months. Revolutionary.

The other factors pale by comparison, but deserve mention nonetheless. One was the inherent repeatability of animation at a time when videotape did not exist; live shows on film could and did repeat, but tired much sooner, and had none of the excitement of the then popular "live" kiddie TV. Another was the ease with which animation passed over the barrier between Black & White and Color TV: cartoons had a long history in color, and additional costs were minimal, mainly in the areas of film stock and lab work. (Live-action had to rethink itself completely for the change to Color TV; costs went through the roof.) And there was SAG: Ronnie Reagan (he was President there first and he'll be back in this story in a later role), residuals (and the lack

thereof in animation), etc. It was just plain easier in the fringe area of kiddie TV not to deal with those actors, and cheaper too.

There was also a need, a need that will be a recurrent theme through what follows: advertisers wanted those young eyeballs, they wanted them on a national basis, they wanted them without dilution (no adult viewership or interference), and they wanted them all at the same time (or at least day-and-date). As other audiences dominated weekday dayparts at a time when most houses had only one TV, there was only one time that need could be met: Saturday morning. (And Sunday, too, until news took over.)

So, throughout the later '60s, animation came to dominate the airwaves on Saturday morning. Advertisers were happy, as they could and did dictate (informally if not directly) what cartoons got on the air, and soon they began to recognize the real power of TV in selling to kids. And the networks were happy, too; the (then) three networks shared over 90% of the kiddie audience, and even third place made money, lots of it, as the scarcity of available national commercial slots (only Saturday and Sunday mornings, for the most part) lifted prices on a consistent basis.

The advertisers had come to dominate kiddie TV content to such an extent that the FCC finally took notice...

Before we get lost in the haze of nostalgia, let's remember that the '60s/early '70s was a mixed bag of TV cartoons. Some of what was made then is now cherished, but much is forgotten, including one show especially, although it made its mark on the industry for the next 15 years: *Hot Wheels*. The advertisers had come to dominate kiddie TV content to such an extent that the FCC finally took notice, and this show was to the FCC the last straw: "program-length commercials" were forced off the air. But not forever.

This FCC pressure was just one of several forces which pushed animation into decline in the early '70s. The premiere of *Sesame Street* brought more pressure on the networks to clean-up kids TV, to make it more "educational" and "real." As networks always want to have peace on the political front, orders came down from on high, and the industry entered the great pabulum era. More live action, more social relevance, more lessons, more BS&P strictures, more boredom. (Please understand that I am not taking sides on the content argument; these are just the facts.)

And, to make matters worse, the networks dropped their orders by nearly 20% (from 16 episodes to the still current 13); this was caused partially by the network-wide cutbacks brought about by the substantial loss of income from the cessation of cigarette advertising. (Until recently, this was the only time three-network advertising income had ever dropped on a year-to-year basis.) TV animation was in a steady decline; in L.A., year-round work was history, as studios were now in production at most 8 months of the year. And, last but not least, overseas production became a factor for the first time; between 1972 and 1980, below-the-line production jobs migrated overseas with lightning speed: the crafts from Animator on down suffered considerably, with the last Ink & Paint jobs finally disappearing completely in the early '80s (except maybe for Filmation).

Salvation

On Wednesday, November 5, 1980, I had lunch with a network children's programming executive, one of the brightest people I know in this business. In a scene that made me feel like I was Watson to her Holmes ("There's an east wind coming, Watson, and a stronger land will lie in the sunshine when the storm has cleared."), she said something I will never forget: "After yesterday's results [the '80 election], this industry will go through major changes. It will never be the same again." How right she was; I only wonder if she really saw the future we've come to.

Ronnie Reagan probably never gave kids TV a thought while he was in the White House, but what he did led to changes that reverberate still, and most of where we are today can be traced back to those years. In short, the FCC did three things: indirectly loosened the constraints on advertiser-controlled kids TV (and program-length commercials); made it far easier to quickly buy and sell TV stations; and re-balanced the playing field to favor the growth of cable. Now how did each of these affect the relationship between advertisers and animation, or animation in general?

We're Back

The first two combined to start the resurgence in TV animation. Advertisers could now fashion shows to suit their specific needs, and tie them to products without fear of penalty. As stations were traded fast and furious, purchase deals became more and more leveraged, and owners were looking around to find programs that cost little or less. Add these together, and you've got - you guessed it, *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe.*

Barter syndication, which gave the show free to the station in return for a portion of the advertising time contained within the show, was perfect for the parties at the dance: the advertiser got day-and-date nearly national broadcast of its commercials and product-supporting show; the sta-

tions got a free first run show with a few spot slots left open for sale; and the producers got new shows made, as well as the chance to cash in if the product was a hit. Another revolution, and lots of work too - 65 episodes for one single series. That was a single series order which almost equaled the total yearly order for each of the then 3 networks.

Advertisers loved barter syndication, as did stations, syndicators, producers, and animation artists. It took off like a rocket; within a few years, over 10 series (650 episodes) per year were vying for timeslots and kids. For the first time in decades, jobs went begging for artists. The drought of work faded from memory. And kids even seemed to like some of the shows.

Directly or indirectly out of barter syndication came the genesis of the Disney Afternoon, the Fox Kids Network, Kids' WB!, and UPN Kids, which all led eventually to the destruction of barter syndication itself. Disney, Fox, the WB and UPN fought (still fight, in some cases) over outlets and timeslots.

Stations discovered that open timeslots were even more valuable than they thought, and independent distributors soon found that barter had a new wrinkle: timeslots were rare, so clearance payments to the stations soon became the norm, and the profitability of these shows withered. Major advertisers could avoid the clearance payments, but the number of barter shows inevitably declined in the '90s as the new networks lined up affiliates and locked up the choice timeslots.

The New Kid on the Block

We all know that Cable broke out in the '80s, and Nickelodeon burst through the cable clutter to grab kids in the early '90s, soon to be followed by the Cartoon Network, both of which are shortly to be joined by Fox. In such a rapidly changing audience as kids (a generational turnover every 5 years for the main portion of the demographic), the power of these new players cannot be overestimated.

Currently, according to the trade press, Nick gets 56% of kids viewership, and Cartoon another 18%. That leaves just 26% for the others: broadcast (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, UPN, the WB) and syndication. Once Fox jumps in on cable, and if Disney Channel changes to ad-supported (rumored), it won't be long before cable controls 90% of the market. Remember that just 15 years ago the (then) 3 broadcast networks controlled 90%; the phenomenal upheaval in the advertising end of the business is moving so fast that many advertisers have not yet caught up to the news.

It won't be long before cable controls 90% of the market.

Of course, these new cable players require hundreds of program timeslots to be filled each week with animation: Cartoon alone has to fill 336 half-hours every 7 days; the others need fewer, as they also run live shows as well as sharing channel space nearly half the day with an older demographic doppelganger. Nick has announced a commitment to spend $350 million over the next few years making new animated shows; the others have not made their plans public, but they have indicated that new animation production will be a high priority. Even if Cartoon and Fox each spend only 25% of what Nick plans, then we're looking at over $500 million being invested in TV animation over the next few years. This is very good for job prospects.

Econ 101

If 90% of kid viewership goes to cable, what does this mean for the non-cable folks? How much new production will they need? Aye, matey, there's the rub. The broadcast networks can't leave the kids business; under current law, each broadcast station is required to air 3 hours a week of kids "educational" material, and affiliates of the networks will look to those networks to take this headache off their hands. But will it be animated? And will any of these broadcast networks be able to retain a critical mass in kids for advertisers?

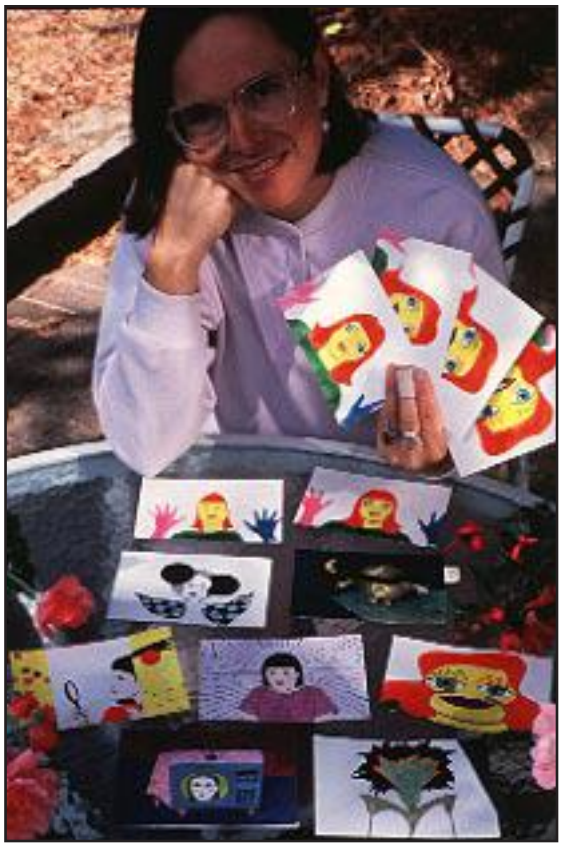
More importantly, where will the advertisers be buying? In the mid-'80s, with ad spending at roughly $400 million, there were approximately 100,000 national commercial spot slots available to advertisers per year, mainly barter syndication on weekdays and Saturday morning on the three networks. By 1999, with ad spending expected to top $1 billion, there will be over 500,000 national commercial spot slots available to advertisers per year, at least 85% on cable, with the other players sharing the rest.

Advertisers rarely lag too far behind current market conditions. For those of you who took economics in college, remember the Law of Supply and Demand. And don't forget Gresham's Law. For those of you who didn't take economics, look up both of them. They're the best tools we have to forecast the future of the advertisers' relationship to TV animation.

Buzz Potamkin is an award-winning independent producer, best known for The Berenstain Bears *and* Dr. Seuss. *Before he escaped L.A. for New York, he had been President of Southern Star Prods and then Executive Vice President of Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.*

Joanna Priestley: A Continuing Dialogue

by Rose Bond



Joanna Priestley.

"Whimsical, personal, charming, experimental, delightful" - all words that have been used to describe the work of independent animator, Joanna Priestley. Over the past seventeen years, she has produced a coven of films (that's thirteen for the uninitiated). Priestley has made animated films using rubber stamps, sand, puppets, cut outs, computer paint programs, found objects, and her signature, white index cards. Diverse in technique, Priestley's films seem bound together by a continuing dialogue of personal exploration. They dance playfully along the narrative of her life.

Where Do the Ideas Come From...

"My primary ideas come from what is going on in my life at the time. But that's just a starting place. It has to be something that I'm totally focused on." Turning 40 was an event she focused on. As a result, working collaboratively on a script with writer Barbara Carnegie, Priestley fashioned the images and reformed the incidents to create Grown Up.

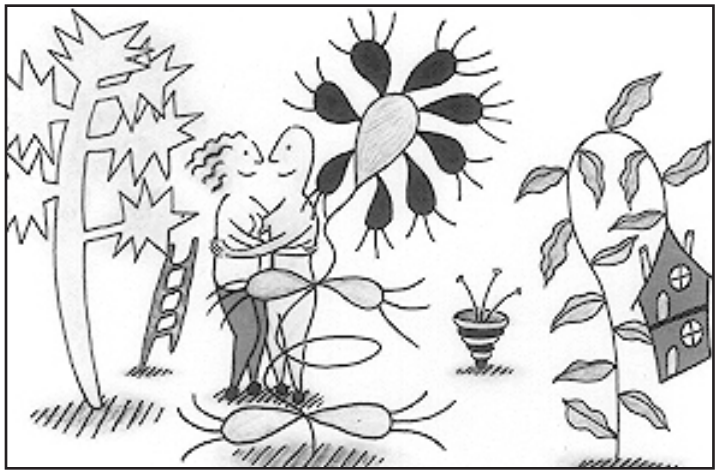
But ideas don't always come so easily affixed to road marks in her life and it often takes time for ideas to "compost." "There are times in my life when it takes six or eight or maybe ten months of just being open-hearted and seeing what comes." Priestley credits a show she saw in 1995, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art by French sculptor Annette Messager, as a current inspiration. "I'm realizing now, two years later, how that show is manifesting in my work. It takes that amount of compost time for ideas to sort and rejoin in new forms."

"Occasionally, I will hear a clear voice about subject matter for my films. Once I had a dream that was an entire film from start to finish and that became After the Fall. But that is exceptionally rare." For Priestley the idea sorting process is not a straightforward one. She muses whether that's not part of the reason why she's on the planet. "I see what a learning process it is in terms of listening to my intuition, my inner voice, voices, and following my heart." She concludes, "It's hard. Sometimes it doesn't work. Sometimes it's muddled, but it's definitely what I'm trying to do."

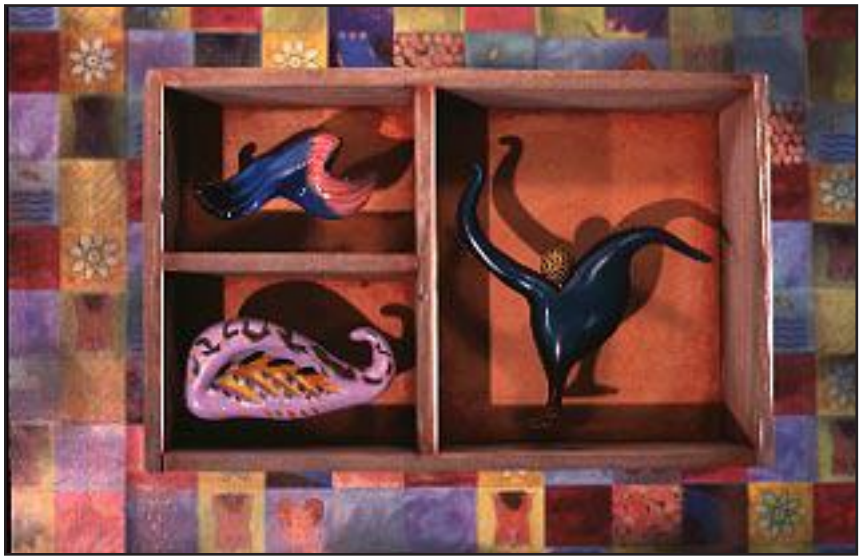
"There have been certain things I wanted to say and now I'm sort of moving beyond that." - Joanna Priestley

Abstraction as the Medium

Living with ambiguity and unsettled thoughts appears to be no impediment to Priestley's creativity. She continues to experiment with new methods of animating and talks about her latest film, Utopia Parkway (1997) as a



After the Fall, a film that Priestley dreamed before she created.



A 3D sculptural element from Priestley's latest film, *Utopia Parkway*.

new direction. "It's totally different. I'm combining different techniques in the same film...much more dramatically." In the five minute film she introduces replacement sculptures inspired by her stylized drawings. These 3 dimensional pieces, used in sequences and animated in boxes, work in combination with drawn, pastel, and water color animation.

Diverse in technique, Priestley's films seem bound together by a continuing dialogue of personal exploration

To pull off this blending of techniques, Priestley turned to abstraction and found inspiration in the work of several pioneers of abstract animation: Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, Norman McLaren and Jules Engel. "Abstraction has really begun to appeal to me. It's taken awhile to get to this point." Priestley elaborates, "There have been certain things I wanted to say and now I'm sort of moving beyond that."

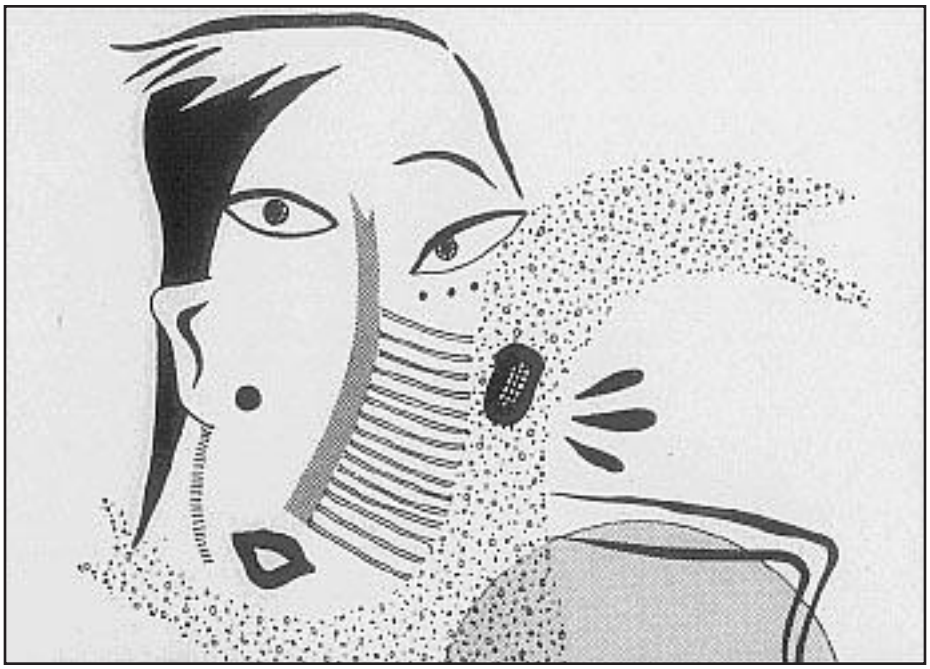
Utopia Parkway is a definite move beyond for Priestley. She had been working on this yet untitled "abstract film" when she happened to see a documentary on the artist Joseph Cornell (1903-1972). Cornell was a reclusive artist who lived most of his life with his mother, younger brother and two sisters in a small, white frame house on Utopia Parkway in Flushing, New York. When his mother died and his sisters moved away, Cornell stayed on, taking care of and fashioning boxes for his invalid brother, Robert, until the brother's death in 1965.

Today Joseph Cornell is thought by many to be America's premiere assemblage artist. His legacy is a collection of small boxes. Cornell managed to combine objects that intrigued him in childhood – stamps, marbles, soap bubbles, butterflies, and seashells – with his adult interests – references to 19th century Europe, ballet, sky charts, cordial glasses and wooden drawers. Though his point of departure is the reality of an eclectic collection of objects, it is the metaphysical nature of Cornell's vision that sets it apart.

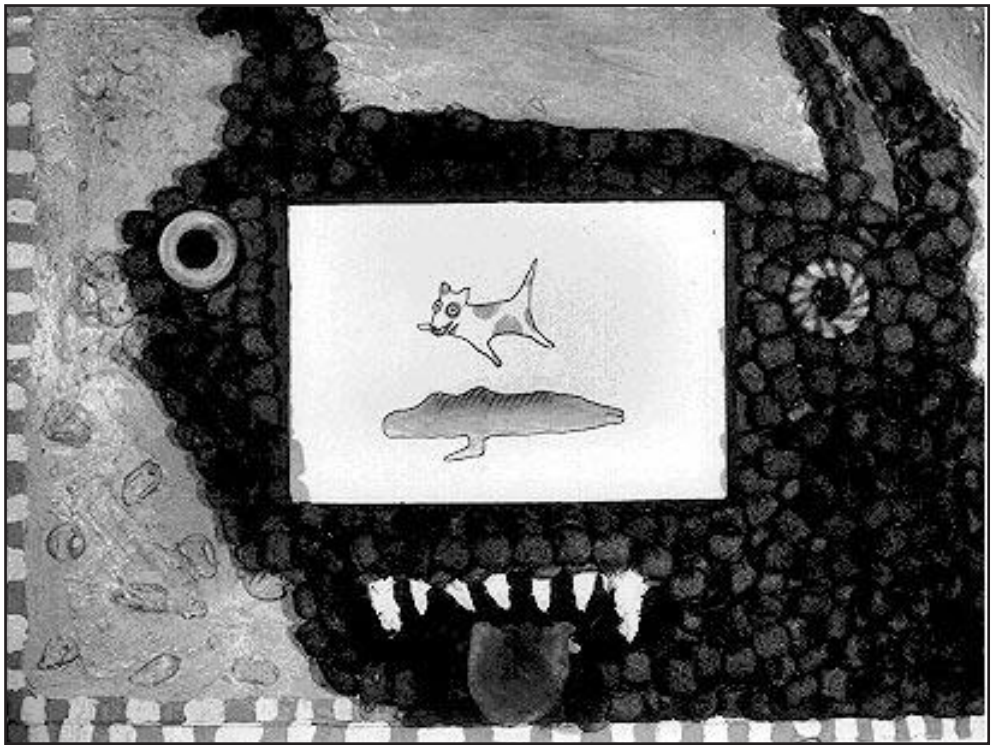
Priestley chanced upon a showing of Cornell's boxes at the Seattle Art Museum. "I began to think about incorporating that format into the new film. I've always worked with frames within the frame, so it was a kind of evolution of the type of work I've been doing." Indeed, you could line up Priestley's films, All My Relations, After the Fall, Hand Held and Utopia Parkway, and see the rectangularization and containment of images within images. "It's something I've worked with as a painter and printmaker," Priestley comments. "I think we all carry with us certain shapes and forms and symbols that we're very close to... it's only when you get older that you realize what they are."

For Priestley, animation is the gift she brings to the world.

Priestley's imagery in Utopia Parkway may differ from Cornell's flaking ephemera - old engravings, canceled postcards and science magazine clippings - garnered from second hand stores along New York's Fourth Avenue;



***Voices*, Joanna Priestley's student film made at CalArts.**



A scene from *All my Relations*, using a dimensional frame around an animated drawing.

but she too mines her images from what has come before and casts them in a metaphysic reality of her own creation. Experimental animators like Faith Hubley, Paul Glabicki and Jules Engel, as well as Copper Age Goddess art, spark her imagination. The images are freshened and made whimsical with a primary color palette. Priestley underlies her Utopia Parkway with a percussive soundtrack by Jamie Haggerty that evokes the tribal. It's as if Priestley is suggesting a connection between the glyph and the glimpses, and delighting in the interplay of the organic and the spirit.

"No matter how chaotic or how jubilant things are, there's always this constant, wonderful place I can come to."
- Joanna Priestley

Art on the Web

As a full time independent film artist, Priestley is a force for promoting animation as an art form. Her films are even distributed by the Museum of Modern Art. She has recently created a web site featuring her work. What was her intention in putting up a web site? "I wanted to put some art on the web. I'm not selling anything. I just wanted to put something interesting in the ether, because from what I observe, 98% of what's on there is just advertising and dull information." What she hopes for quite simply is that "someone stumbles across this and is thrilled."

Priestley worked with David White and Al Hooton of Level Seven Communications to create the site. As Priestley explains, "It was much more complicated than we thought initially and they spent many, many hours putting it together." The result is an outstanding site located at http://www.easystreet.com/~joanna. To see it in full motion, you'll need Netscape 3.0 or higher and the Macromedia Shockwave plug-in, which can be downloaded from buttons on the site.

An Expression of Life

Clearly, for Joanna Priestley animation is an artistic form of expression. An incredibly prolific animator, Priestley talked about the importance of that work in her life. "In the past five years a lot of things have changed for me, yet the one constant thing through it all has been my work. No matter how chaotic or how jubilant things are, there's always this constant, wonderful place I can come to."

"I sometimes wonder, and I guess everyone does, how this work relates to what I see as a worldwide environmental and social crisis going on. What I've really come to realize is that the most important thing we can do is make peace with ourselves and our lives in our own communities." For Priestley, animation is the gift she brings to the world. Without fail, at every showing there will be several people who come up and tell her how much her work has meant to them. "That's what keeps me going."

Priestley lives a life full of art animation. Besides creating films, she tours with them, judges at international festivals, and is a member of the Short Film branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She remains a working spokesperson for the art of animation. "It's really important to show animation in art galleries. I've spent my entire career trying to educate people that this is an important art form." As animation writer Bill Givens penned recently, Joanna Priestley remains, "a leading light in the world of animation."

Rose Bond teaches Digital Animation at the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon and is editor of the ASIFA-NW newsletter. Her award winning films, created by drawing and painting directly on film, are in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

Charlie Thorson: Character Design In Classic Animation

by Gene Walz

In June 1939, Charlie Thorson broke a five-year contract with Leon Schlesinger's Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies Studio and moved on to work for Dave and Max Fleischer at their new operation in Miami, Florida. Thorson was only one of many workers lured away from Hollywood to help the Fleischers complete their first animated feature film, Gulliver's Travels. His contribution, however, was immediate and not insignificant. He designed a wacky bird named Twinkletoes and cooked up some comic business so that the character could be shoe-horned, at the last minute, into the finished film.

Thorson, however, was not all that impressed with the movie when it was finally rushed into theaters less than a year later. So he withdrew his name from the credits. It was an odd and uncharacteristic gesture for Thorson.

For the rest of his life, Thorson would fly into a jaw-clenching rage at the mere mention of Walt Disney's name because of the anonymity Walt imposed on his workers. He was especially furious that Disney left his name out of the endless credits for Snow White, evidently because Thorson had quit the studio before the movie was finished. When Thorson ventured into children's book publishing, he was so thirsty for recognition that he often signed every single illustration in his books. As it turns out, Gulliver's Travels would prove to be Thorson's last chance to see his name up on the silver screen. He worked in the animation business from 1935 to 1946, but his contribution to the golden age of animation has gone virtually unrecorded.

Self-portrait by Charlie Thorson. Courtesy of Dr. Stephen Thorson.

The Character Designer

Charlie Thorson was a character designer or, as Schlesinger termed it, a character model man. In the assembly-line method of cartoon production refined by Disney Studios in the early 1930s, and later copied by all its competitors, the position of character designer was of utmost importance.

Combining the talents of a casting director, a costume designer and a make-up artist from live-action movies with the precision of a portrait painter and the imagination of a sculptor, the character designer created distinctive anthropomorphized animals or familiar caricatures that would star in animated movies. Sometimes the design of the characters was determined by studio competitions; several employees would submit drafts of the proposed characters for a story, and the final design would be chosen by formal or informal voting. Usually the character designer simply consulted the animation supervisors or directors or took his cue from notes or rough sketches.

After the look of the cast of characters was determined, it was the character designer's job to provide model sheets or action sheets for the film's animators and in-betweeners. These model sheets showed the characters in the film's significant poses and provided front-views, side-views, and back-views, if necessary. Model sheets also delineated the underlying geometries of circles and lines that defined a character's size and shape and proportions. They could also include close-ups and written instructions for the precise details of costume and expression.

Charlie Thorson was a character designer or, as Schlesinger termed it, a character model man.

With so many different people involved in drawing as many as 5,000 cels for each seven minute cartoon, the character designer had to draw enough precise reference points so that even the clumsiest and least observant artists could work together. Along with the storyboard, a series of vivid, careful model sheets provide the indispensable blueprints behind each animated cartoon,

even today. For the kind of personality animation that Disney emphasized, and especially at studios trying to create animation stars to compete with the likes of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Pluto, the character designer took on a special importance. As with John Wayne or Shirley Temple, the look of a cartoon character was central to the success of a film.

A model sheet for Terrytoon's *Happy Circus*. Courtesy of Dr. Stephen Thorson. © Terrytoons Inc.

Thorson's Beginning

Charlie Thorson wasn't the first character designer to work in America's animation factories, but circumstances, plus his own talent and adventurous spirit, made him one of the most sought after and influential.

Thorson was 45 and divorced when he left a secure position as a graphic artist and catalogue illustrator in Winnipeg, Canada to try his hand at the animation business. He was twice the age of most of his co-workers and ten years older than his employer when he was hired by Walt Disney in early 1935.

At the time Disney was fixated on "cuteness." Impossibly precocious and cherubic infants plus cuddly and charming anthropomorphized animals predominated. All his characters had large, expressive eyes for communicating wonderment, varying degrees of apprehensiveness, and sensitivity. Most of the characters had heads as big as their bodies and were built on pear-shaped or vertical dumb-bell-shaped armatures. These shapes readily connote vulnerability and equipoise, symmetry and instability and help to create overpoweringly cute characters.

Although he had a robust sense of humor, a Viking's taste for women and alcohol, and a restless, pack-up-and-leave attitude, Charlie Thorson soon became an expert at the sentimental cuteness that defined Disney in the 1930s. He could do "cute" better than anyone. For Disney he designed characters for *Elmer Elephant, The Old Mill, Wynken, Blynken and Nod, Country Cousin, Toby Tortoise Returns*, and most importantly, *Little Hiawatha*. He also worked on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, telling his friends back in Winnipeg that his design for the main character was modeled after his Icelandic girlfriend. On this is based the local legend that Snow White is Icelandic.

Although he had a robust sense of humor, a Viking's taste for women and alcohol, and a restless, pack-up-and-leave attitude, Charlie Thorson soon became an expert at the sentimental cuteness that defined Disney ...

After Leaving Disney

Angry that he was getting neither the money nor the recognition that his contributions deserved, Thorson quit the Disney's employ and immediately went to work for Harman-Ising Studios. He then quickly switched to MGM where he was mainly charged with transforming the ill-fated comic-page characters from *The Captain and the Kids* into potential movie stars.

After a year at MGM, Thorson jumped to the Warner Bros. camp where he was recruited to provide characters for the young Chuck Jones and the neophyte team of Cal Dalton and Bugs Hardaway. For Jones he created the Sniffles the Mouse characters, Inki, the Little Lion Hunter, and his nemesis, the Mynah Bird, and the curious puppy and pals. Most famously, he designed the prototype for Bugs Bunny, the infamous Elmer Fudd, plus the Rainmaker and the Lady Known as Loo for Dalton and Hardaway. It was one of his most productive and influential periods. He helped initiate Chuck Jones as a director, and he played a crucial role in the creation of characters that are still with us today. But the ever-restless designer stayed at Warners for less than a year.

At first glance, the new Fleischers Studio in Miami must have looked like the best of all possible opportunities for Thorson when he moved there in 1939. His work on *Gulliver's Travels* was quickly followed by the redesign of all the characters from *Raggedy Ann and Andy* for an important film featurette and even the redesign of the studio's most famous stars, Popeye and his cohorts. His favorite commission at Fleischers, however, was for *The Stone Age* cartoon series. This prototype for *The Flintstones* was based on scores of prehistoric creatures and characters. Thorson both designed and created story ideas for the series. Made in black & white and largely forgotten today, these cartoons were the closest Thorson came to studio contentment. When the Fleischer Brothers Studio was closed, he was devastated, but not without prospects.

After working successfully as

a children's book illustrator and in billboard and magazine advertising in New York for a while, Thorson returned to animation at Paul Terry's Studios in 1941. He was there when Mighty Mouse was created, but his specific contribution to this famous character is unknown. In fact, the exact nature of his work at Terry's Studio, at Columbia/Screen Gems where he worked during 1942, and at George Pal's Studios where he worked after this are all mysteries.

He [Thorson] worked in the animation business from 1935 to 1946, but his contribution to the golden age of animation has gone virtually unrecorded.

A Mystery

Since Thorson's name never appears in movie credits and he is rarely cited in the studio records that remain, the task of determining his output as a character designer is not an easy one. Luckily, he was so enraged at the fact that Disney would not acknowledge his contributions that he decided to keep his own personal animation archives. These include inspiration drawings and photostats of model sheets for many of his most famous character designs. Sadly, Thorson was an unreliable archivist. His vagabond's nature and his extravagant lifestyle caused him to sell, lose or discard much of his portfolio. What remains affords only a glimpse of his effect on the golden age of animation.

The current popularity of animation artifacts may help expand on his reputation. Thorson model sheets must exist in collections not yet examined. Since model sheets were rarely signed by the character designers, however, identifying Thorson's work is not as easy as it might seem; he has a distinctive signature but it is rarely ever seen.

Tell-Tale Signs

How is a Charlie Thorson model sheet identified? The easiest clue is his slightly flamboyant handwriting. Thorson makes very recognizable curves on the second leg of his h's, m's, and n's. His v's, w's and y's, used less often, also have a curvy leg, and his t's, and less pronouncedly his e's and f's, have a curved-up top. Other tall-tale features are his r's, with its angled leg penetrating its upper curve, his s's, with the top larger than the bottom, and his c's, which continue their counterclockwise swirl almost into a g-shape.

A 1942 model sheet for Fleischer's Raggedy Ann & Andy. Courtesy of Dr. Stephen Thorson. © Fleischer Studios.

But Thorson's work can always be distinguished by the formality, precision, and attractiveness of his character designs. Thorson's enormous capacity for liquor and his ribald, anarchic sense of humor are never betrayed in his drawings. The firm, unwavering lines have an ease and lightness that must have been come from both raw talent and a tremendous exercise of will. The soft, unforced three-dimensionality and the simple suggestion of an attractive inner life to the characters are his gift to the medium.

Character designers are certainly not as crucial to the art of animation as animation directors and studio heads, but until their roles in the creation of our animation classics are recognized, our understanding of the craft and the process will be incomplete. Charlie Thorson created hundreds of distinctive characters with recognizable personalities. To assist in the animation, he likely drafted model sheets with many hundreds, if not thousands, of poses. He also provided story ideas for some of the films he worked on. He helped to launch the directorial careers of at least three animation supervisors — Chuck Jones, Cal Dalton, and Ben Hardaway. He made a definite contribution and there must be others like him who should also be recognized.

Charlie Thorson worked for Disney (1935-1937), Harman-Ising (1937), MGM (1937-1938), Warner Brothers (1938-1939), Fleischer Studios (1939-1940), Paul Terry's Terrytoons (1940?-1942), Columbia/Screen Gems (1942-1943) and George Pal Studios (1943?-1945?). Anyone with model sheets that might have been drawn by Thorson, or with stories or photos of him is asked to contact Gene Walz at walz@cc.umanitoba.ca

Gene Walz is head of the film program at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. He is currently finishing a biography on Charlie Thorson and is now editing a book called Great Canadian Films.

The Television Animation Portfolio: A Model

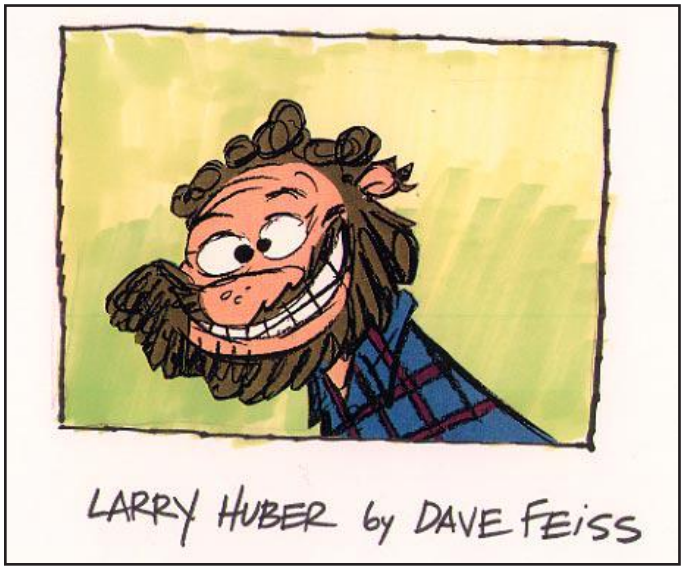
by Larry Huber

In the 25 plus years I've been a working as a professional in the business, I must have reviewed hundreds of portfolios. What I'm looking for varies according to the job I'm filling. If I'm hiring a storyboard artist, I don't need to see a lot of color work. If I need a background painter, character sketches won't get you the job. A little careful editing of your portfolio to fit the job you're being interviewed for, might save us both a lot of bother.

The television animation industry employs hundreds of artists, many of them filling specific classifications. You don't have to be good at drawing everything if you're just real good at drawing the something that fits the classification. So what are the typical jobs?

Storyboard:

This is a shot by shot illustration of the animated film. It is used to communicate as much information as possible to all the artists, overseas and domestic, that are working on the film. It includes background sketches, incidental character and prop designs, animation poses and all the necessary camera description. This is where the story is told and the basic film designed. It is a "Bible" for the animated film.



A caricature of Larry Huber by Dave Feiss, the creator/director of *Cow & Chicken*.

Portfolio Requirements: A typical portfolio for this job would require examples of good drawing, some background and character design and many composition set-ups. Storyboards are generally done from scripts or detailed outlines so samples of completed or test examples of storyboards are necessary.

Background Layout Design:

Each scene of a storyboard becomes a layout, which is a detailed breakdown of the shot. Key character posing is drawn in proportion along with the necessary "props." The background elements are designed and labeled, often including mood rendering and light sources. All camera information is included, from the basic, "What field is this scene at?" to the complicated, "What's the degree of rotation on this pan?" Layout is no longer done domestically in television animation. Instead, it has been broken down into several classifications, including Background Design. No location, actual or fantasy, is exempt from animation, and the BG designer had better be able to draw it. Landscapes, seascapes, exteriors, interiors, mood pieces, day and night, outer space to the bowels of Hell is the realm of this artist.

A little careful editing of your portfolio to fit the job you're being interviewed for, might save us both a lot of bother.

Portfolio Requirements:Background drawings exclusively will got you the job if the examples are good and varied in style and location. Get your perspective, details and locale right.

Character And Prop Design:

From the principal players to the innocuous member of a crowd, the character

designer must draw the right type in the proper costume. Characters are not limited to humans. Animals, fantasy monsters, elves or space aliens make up the roster of the animated cartoon. A "prop" is, generally, any non-living item that finds itself kicked, carried, thrown or moved during a scene. If it doesn't move, it's painted on the background and becomes the responsibility of that artist. Sometimes a prop can become a character (i.e. The candlestick and clock in Disney's Beauty and the Beast) and therefore, more detail must be paid to its' design.

Portfolio Requirements: Realistic and cartoon character examples should augment a solid life and animal drawing portfolio. Nudes are fine but costumed figures should be included. I'd rather see character drawings of your own design than copies of classic Disney or Warner characters. Prop drawings of cars, boats, aircraft and tanks are necessary along with mundane items like table settings, furniture and radios to secure a spot as a prop artist.

Prop and background artists should show samples of everyday objects in their portfolios. This is a lamppost as sketched by Carlos Ramos. © Nickelodeon.

Background Painting:

Know the difference between the gray-blue of a stormy sky and the blue-green tones of the ocean's depths? Can you paint with water colors or acrylics, control a wash and use an airbrush? Can you reproduce the texture of stone or the translucence of glass without resorting to a computer program? If you answered, "Yes!" to these questions, this might be the job for you.

Portfolio Requirements: Color, color and more color. Most background paintings are done "on the clock" so fast-drying mediums are the norm. Acrylics are the paint of necessity. If you are able to "paint" by computer that's "nice" but it must be an additional skill, not the basis of your work. Slides of your best work are okay but I prefer to look at good color copies or original material.

Animal sketches are always a good demonstration of expressive drawing. This primate is from the sketchbook of Carlos Ramos, a Nicktoons artist currently working on designing animated shorts for Nicktoons. © Nickelodeon.

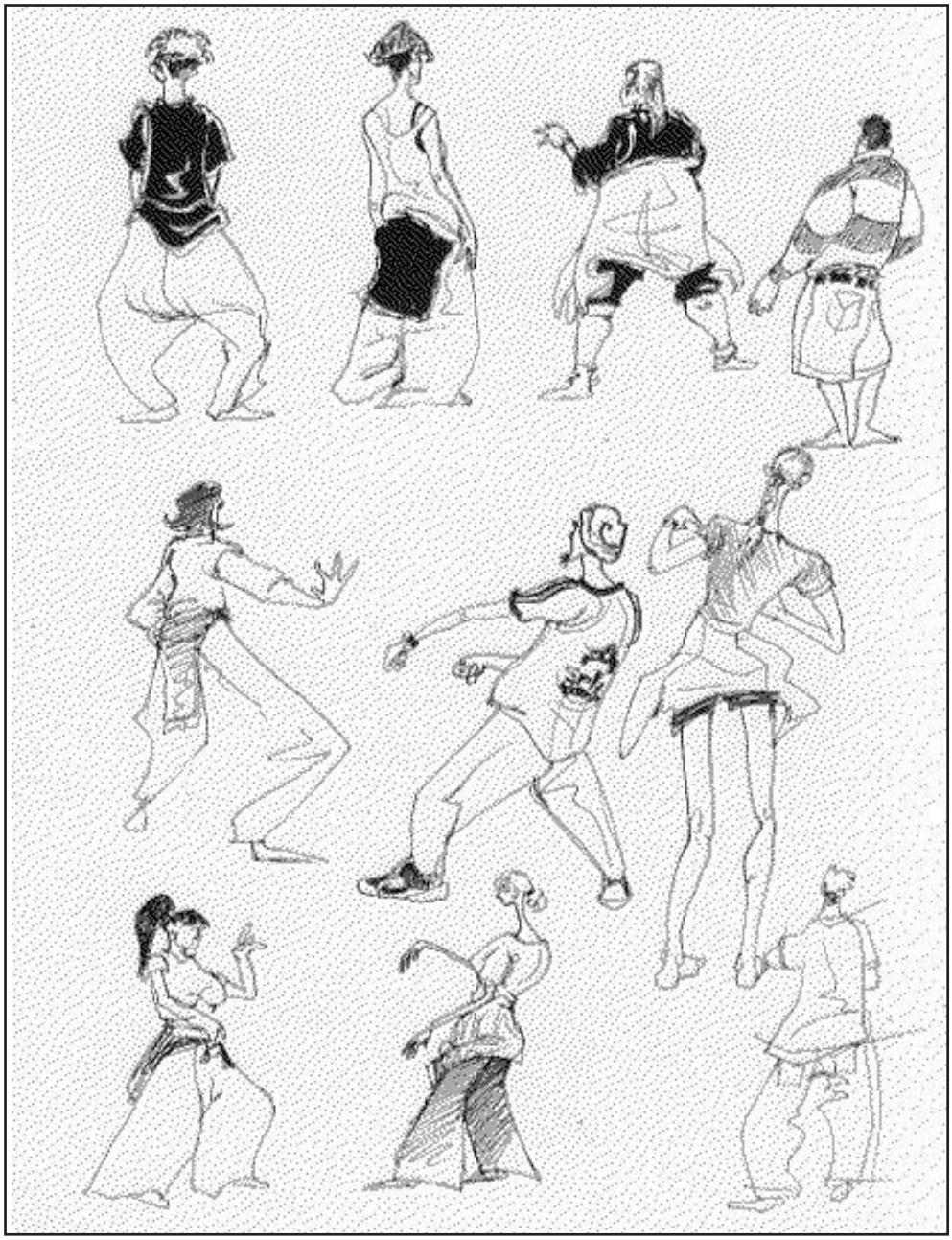
Color Key:

Originally done by the Background department, it is now a separate job. This involves choosing the colors of the characters and props, sometimes changing the palette between day and night. The colors of the backgrounds must be considered carefully when choosing the character palette. This is a hard job to get "right outta school." I usually hire professionals with examples of production work. A solid graphic arts portfolio with lots of examples of the good use of color in layout, background painting and character designs might get you a starting spot as a back-up artist.

I don't run an art school so you'd better know the basics of proportion, anatomy, perspective, vanishing points and the "golden mean."

Tips of the Trade

• *When bringing in a portfolio, make a selection of your best work. Don't bring in everything in the hope that my worst taste may lie some-*



"The best professional artists are those who can't stop drawing." These sketches by Carlos Ramos were made while observing a Tai Chi class. © Nickelodeon

where in your drawings.

• I like to see "napkin" portfolios. A sketch book tells me more about your ability than the senior project you spent six months perfecting. I like to see what you draw when you're having fun. Bring the doodles you do when you're riding the Metro-Rail or waiting to be served at a restaurant. The best professional artists are those you can't stop drawing. They draw well, they draw fast and they draw all the time.

• However, I need to see that you have a range. Life drawings are useful but so are animal sketches. If you have more than one style, show it off. I'm not interested in seeing various techniques so important in publication art. Save the scratch-board stuff for the weekends.

• I don't run an art school so you'd better know the basics of proportion, anatomy, perspective, vanishing points and the "golden mean." I hire artists and train them into specific, marketable goals in animation, but I don't teach life drawing.

Talented, hard-working artists are in demand.

Animation is booming. Talented, hard-working artists are in demand. A solid portfolio is the first step to getting a professional gig in the industry. Good luck. I hope to be seeing your portfolio soon.

Additional drawings from the sketchbook of Carlos Ramos can be found in the html version of this issue.

Larry Huber is certainly a veteran of television animation. He started out in 1969 as an assistant animator at Hanna-Barbera, then worked for 15 years as a producer at Ruby-Spears, after working on features with Ralph Bakshi. He returned to Hanna-Barbera in 1990, and this year, moved over to Nicktoons, where he is executive producer on a new pilot series of animated shorts.

SIGGRAPH '97: Too Much to Do, See and Think in a Week

SIGGRAPH '97 came to Los Angeles with such a hype and fervor that before anyone knew what was happening, everyone was involved. The event was the talk of the town as SIGGRAPH graciously welcomed, not only the usual crowd of academia, visual effects artists and students, but by week's end, everyone from the curious to those remotely involved with the entertainment or computing field.

Our extensive coverage of this event includes several features:

Photo by Cintia Matte Ruschel. © Animation World Network.

- *Avi Hoffer's* **The Films of SIGGRAPH '97: A Coming of Age**, *reviews this year's groundbreaking films from the Electronic Theater.*

- *Newshound Wendy Jackson brings us* **News from SIGGRAPH '97**, *a comprehensive report on all of the new and exciting products and events that were announced throughout the week.*

- *We are also presenting as an extra special treat; our very own* **AWN Gallery of SIGGRAPH '97's Computer Animation Festival**, *a sampling of images, Quicktime movies, and notes from more than 30 of the films presented at SIGGRAPH's Electronic Theater. This presentation is only available in the HTML version of the magazine.*

But wait! There's more! We have also included a survey of top computer animation studio executives as they discuss the challenges they face running a digital facility. Take a look at **The Digital Studio Challenge: A Catch 22** *to see what representatives from Rhythm & Hues, Fantôme, Neurones Animation and Pacific Data Images have to say.*

Enjoy!

The Films of SIGGRAPH '97: A Coming of Age

by Avi Hoffer

The HTML version of this article contains three Quicktime movies: Facade by Paul Debevec, Pets by John Lally and Valerie Mih and Flipbook by Satoshi Kitahara.

This year's film selections at the SIGGRAPH '97 Electronic Theater in Los Angeles celebrated the expanding diversity of storytelling talent and production technique now possible with software-based animation tools. The "CG" animation genre of the late '80s and early '90s (typically denoting some robotic, overly geometric sci-fi scenario) is giving way to some traditionally-inspired techniques, expressive characterization, and more conceptually provocative filmmaking.

Of this year's screening, Judith Crow, Chair of the Electronic Theater, explained that, "I really wanted to see the collaborations between people in scientific disciplines and artistic disciplines, what kind of work can be spawned from people of these mixtures. It turns out that people don't necessarily make that very explicit, but it's there. It's there in the work. I think this year the work is stronger for all of those teams that people have built up."

A blue-haired girl eats a passenger train in *Kutchae!*, an animated i.d. directed by Isao Nishigori for MTV Japan. © 1996 Music Channel Co., Ltd.

The Genres

The animation exhibited can be broken down into roughly four categories which I've labeled for convenience: (1) cool math/eye candy (2) synthetic organics (3) film effects and (4) "old-fashioned" technoid CGI of the type noted earlier.

The "cool math" category typically stretches a series of interesting techniques such as morphing shapes into an entire film by

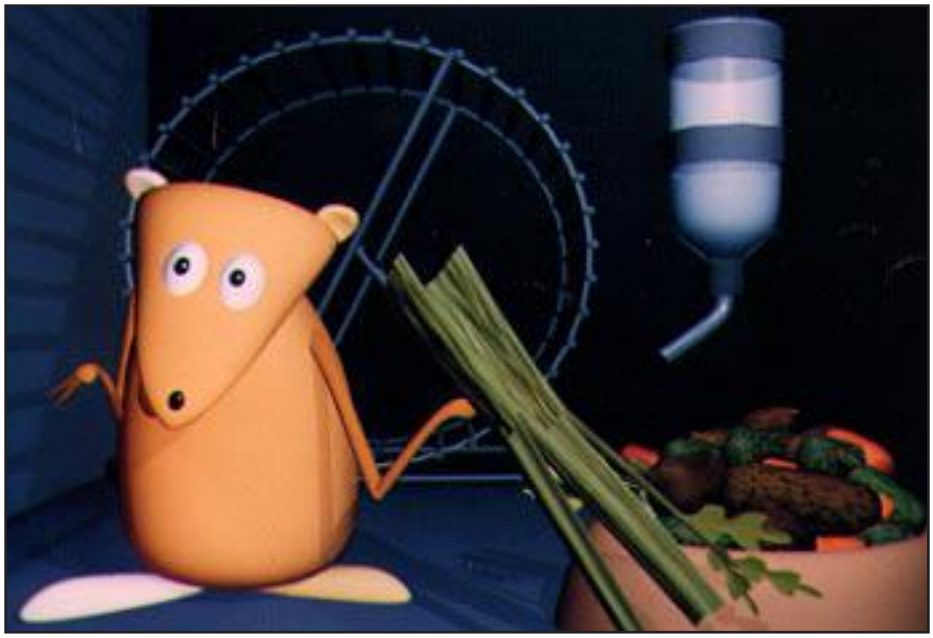
***Facade* by Paul Debevec.**

ILM's visual effects for The *Lost World: Jurassic Park* was among the feature film work represented in the festival. © 1997 Universal Studios and Amblin Entertainment.

alternating repeating mathematical motion patterns until a hypnotic trance is achieved. While this category might be very popular in a Rave or club setting (i.e. *Runners* by Kazuma Morino and Steven Churchill's *Pellucid Spaces*), the abstract lo-cal content quickly wears thin and leaves you hungry for something heartier. At least with films like *Facade* by Paul Debevec, the audience is made aware that they are watching an animation experiment, illustrating a new technique without any pretense towards the craft of filmmaking. *Facade* was the direct result of a paper presented at SIGGRAPH '96 which postulated the possibility of generating real-time 3-D graphics on standard hardware with the use of a few spatial photographs for texture. A year later, Paul Debevec's team from UC Berkeley have presented a compelling visual demonstration of their technology using the university campus as a "virtual set." This low-polygon, photo-realistic 3D animation has extremely useful applications in education and entertainment.

SIGGRAPH's film program profoundly demonstrates how versatile the computer has become as an imaging tool.

The same might be said about *Tour Into the Picture* by Ken Anjyo, which illustrates the use of 2-dimensional photo-realistic textures mapped onto geometric planes in 3D space. The result is akin to a multi-plane animation camera except that the camera is free to roam in any direction creating a dynamic and stylized sense of depth.



Pets **is a student film created at USC by John Lally and Valerie Mih. Lally currently works at Square USA and Mih works at Pixar.**

The synthetic organic category refers to the filmmakers who use the computers as a tool but are more interested in simulating or improving upon traditional "analog" animation techniques. This category includes one of Judith Crow's personal favorites, *Cheerful Country,* a student film by Pierre Henon of the ENSAD in France. Says Crow, "The look of it is actually closer to maybe the look of stop-motion. It has the look of film because of the way they process the animation. It is just a lovely piece of story-telling. It's a lovely art piece. It's visually a very, very different work here and very funny, and so it's just an amazing skilled piece of animation. You don't spend all your time thinking about the techniques that were used and being aware of whether this is technically proficient. You're just completely absorbed into the story of it."

Mass Manipulator by Florencia and Pablo Mederico Faivre also captured a distinctive hand-made quality. Somewhat visually inspired by Terry Gilliam, this film portrays a pus-colored fascist dictator literally using the masses as toilet paper. Besides the audience appeal of scatological humor, the film successfully integrates several hybrid styles without calling attention to technical execution.

The film effects category covers the best of digital Hollywood. This years' standouts included shots from the *Jurassic Park* sequel, Disney's *Hercules,* Digital Domain's EV-1 commercial, *Appliances,* which features excited electrical appliances, and a sneak peak at a very convincing computer generated luxury liner from James Cameron's upcoming *Titanic.* These effect shots drew big applause which shouldn't be surprising given the local Los Angeles crowd, many of whose bread and butter depends on this type of photo-realistic animation and compositing.

"I suspect that students are now getting a lot of training, and they're getting a lot of input on traditional animation techniques." - Judith Crow

Lastly, there were still a few space battles and cyberaction pieces that have long been synonymous with computer animation such as

***Flipbook* by Satoshi Kitahara.**

Flipbook by Satoshi Kitahara and Soulblade from Namco. It's very competent work but certainly not cutting edge.

An Exciting Time to be 3D

Thankfully, the real vanguard of digital animation is combining both the technology of the future and the rich techniques of the past to create powerfully executed, well-conceived films. Judith Crow adds that, "I suspect that students are now getting a lot of training, and they're getting a lot of input on traditional animation techniques. They're not just thinking about what looks like computer graphics because I don't think we'd be getting such consistently good work out of these places, if they are not getting such a well-rounded education."

Other important mentions include: Pets, a humorous student film by John Lally and Valerie Mih which superimposes people's dialogue from documentary interviews, with the mouths of 3D animated domestic pets, which speak directly to the camera; Gabola the Great by Tim Cheung at Pacific Data Images, a refined piece of character work with good comedic timing and a twisted ending; MTV Japan's on-air promotions which are even more fun than the U.S. promos and finally, a stylish surreal Coca-Cola commercial made by Marianne Barcilon in France which continues to push the boundaries of photography with the use of unsettling 3D camera moves and seamless compositing.

Thankfully, the real vanguard of digital animation is combining both the technology of the future and the rich techniques of the past...

SIGGRAPH's film program profoundly demonstrates how versatile the computer has become as an imaging tool. Artists around the world no longer need be limited by hardware or compromised by inflexible software. The learning curve for the animator seems to be hitting the downward slope and the results are exciting. Artists are now free to explore in a digital environment, what is possible at the far reaches of their imaginations. The distinctions between "traditional" and "computer" animation continue to blur and blend so that quite soon, the "CG" label may be merely a quaint historical artifact dating back to a brief period of time when gearheads posing as animators ruled the earth; a time before programmers understood squashing and stretching; an awkward time of hardware adolescence and interface evolution.

Avi Hoffer is Dictator of Digital Production at Acme Filmworks in Hollywood, and owner of Red Herring Pictures, a digital media production company in Venice, California. He has written for MacWorld, MacWeek, DV, In Motion and Interactive Jumpstart magazines, and will be a featured faculty member at the Digital Video Conference and Exposition in October.

News From SIGGRAPH '97

by Wendy Jackson

For those of you who didn't have a chance to absorb the who, what and how of the 24th International Conference on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques, *interactive* was definitely the key word in the acronym this year. Virtual Reality, VRML, and Motion Capture were everywhere. . . . More than 48,000 people attended SIGGRAPH, creating an unending sea of bodies in the showroom, navigating the jungle of Hardware, 3D Software, and 2D Software. on display from 300 exhibiting companies . . .Recruiting was on the agenda of many studios. . . . And we got a sneak peak at some of the coolest Content around, as well as a look at what's In Production.

Photo by Cintia Matte Ruschel. © Animation World Network.

Content

Everyone was showing off the portion of this summer's effects-driven feature that was created using their hardware, software or services. Films such as *Jurassic Park: Lost World, Spawn, Contact, Air Force One, Species, Men In Black* and *Titanic* were played in heavy rotation on video monitors all over the place!

Odyssey Productions produced two new computer animation videos: *Cyberscape: A Computer Animation Vision* by Beny Tchaicovsky, and *Computer Animation Showcase,* a 45 minute compilation reel. Both titles, distributed through Sony Music Video and in stores on September 23, will be reviewed in the upcoming issue of *Animation World Magazine.* Odyssey is also producing a video of the works of abstract computer artist Yoichiro Kawaguchi.

3D Software

Kinetix released the latest version of 3D Studio Max, with more than 1,000 new features, according to their literature. 3D StudioMax R2 for PCs is $3,495 for a new single-user license with prices for upgrades starting at $795. Several 3D StudioMax-compatible programs and plug-ins were also unveiled. . . . Digimation alone released 15 new plug-ins including the self descriptive ClayStudio Pro, Shag: Fur and The Incredible Comicshop. . . . .Sven Technologies released SurfaceSuiteMAX, a new plug-in for mapping photo realistic textures. . . LambSoft showcased Smirk, a plug-in for facial animation which uses pre-set expressions which can be altered to fit any face. It also works with motion capture devices. . . . .Kinetix previewed CharacterStudio 2.0, which, used with 3D StudioMax, creates movements and behaviors which can be applied to characters. This technology was used in the creation of CG sequences for Hanna-Barbera's *Jonny Quest* series.

Alias/Wavefront demonstrated their highly anticipated Maya software, which has been pushed back for an early 1998 release. Called "the next generation of 3D animation software," Maya will present Alias' first new software architecture in years. . . . .Maya is currently going through beta testing at 50 locations, including, most of the major computer animation houses. Meanwhile, inside Alias/Wavefront's lab, Chris Landreth, creator of the Academy Award nominated short, *The End,* is creating a new short animation with the Maya program. Maya will be priced similarly to Alias PowerAnimator 8.5 , which was released back in April. . . . . .Alias also announced an exclusive alliance with Physical Effects Inc., developers of a technology for animating cloth, which will be incorporated into Maya.

Softimage is developing Sumatra, another software package

built with new architecture. Like Alias has with Maya, Softimage has pushed their new product's release back to early 1998. Everyone is curious which will come out first. This should be an interesting time for the industry, and a good time to buy, with two competing high-end 3D animation packages being released around the same time. . . . Now in beta testing, Sumatra is called "the world's first collaborative nonlinear animation system." Only trying out the real McCoy's will determine which software package will best meet the needs of the demanding professional 3D industry.

***Floops*, a VRML cartoon on the Web created by Protozoa. Download a Quicktime version now! at http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.6/2.6pages/2.6.toc.html**

NewTek's Lightwave 3D is available to Sun computer users for the first time, with a $2,995 package which runs on Sun's Ultra Creator 3D workstations. Version 5.5 of Lightwave 3D for Windows 95/NT was released in July. Also released at SIGGRAPH, is the new Motion Plug-in Pack for Lightwave 3D, offering five complex animation tools for $200.

Questar released a version 3 upgrade of World Construction Set, their software package for modeling and rendering photo realistic landscapes and natural settings such as clouds, water, terrain, planets and vegetation. Compatible with Lightwave 3D and 3D StudioMax. The cost is $835.

2D Software

With digital ink and paint technology steadily being adopted industry-wide for animation production, there is a wider selection of 2D software packages to digitize every production process, from storyboarding to ink and paint to camera. The competition, however, is good news for people in production, as it results in development of better software, and competitive pricing. There will be a lot of growth in this area before the year 2000.

Cambridge Animation Systems is growing, and their software package, Animo is now the most widely installed 2D animation production software, with licenses at 200 studios in nearly 50 countries. The company will release Animo Ax-Cel for PCs in November, opening a new window of opportunity for home users to collaborate with the larger studio systems running on Silicon Graphics machines. The PC version will be available with a floating license for $12,000. Not exactly small change, but certainly a step in the right direction for the individual user market. Animo has been continually developed through beta testing at DreamWorks SKG and Warner Bros. Feature Animation, where it is now being used in feature animation productions Prince of Egypt and Quest for Camelot. Other studios currently using Animo include Nelvana (Sam & Max), Sunbow (Salty's Lighthouse), Pentafour and Rich Animation (The King and I). . . . Great Eastern Technology has recently been established as a reseller for Cambridge Animation System's Animo software. They will provide hardware and software sales, system integration and support for CAS customers.

Linker Systems released version 3.5 of The Animation Stand for Intel and Digital's Alpha platforms running on Windows NT. New features include eight new animation tools, automatic batch scan cleaning and simultaneous camera moves and rotations. At $5,000. Animation Stand is designed for affordability to smaller studios and even individuals. . . . .CalArts Character Animation Program recently licensed a Mac OS platform version of The Animation Stand for use as the 2D computer animation system in their recently upgraded computer lab.

Motion Capture

Woah! This micro-industry of computer animation has become a whole industry of its own seemingly overnight. Just in the past year, we've seen the development of wireless technologies, the opening of Medialab's L.A. studio, and the formation of the Performance Animation Society, a non-profit organization for this hybrid field. At SIGGRAPH, there seemed to be a proliferation of motion capture/real-time animation displays. Apparently, the abundance of transmitting technology on the showroom floor caused some electromagnetic interference that made it difficult for some exhibitors to operate their technology. Magnetic motion capture technology is particularly sensitive to this type of interference. Despite technical difficulties, there was plenty going on in the field. Some highlights:

SimGraphics literally put on a show to feature their recent adoption of Polhemus' StarTrak magnetic wireless motion capture system. Enacting something of a live soap opera named My Lover, My Dance Partner, My Alien, they demonstrated their ability to simultaneously capture motion of multiple characters. This is the first performance anima-

tion system to be ported to the Silicon Graphics 3 pipe Onyx2 System, which enables live motion capture projection in a 120 degree wraparound viewing environment.

Medialab recently made the switch from Polhemus' previous non-wireless system to Ascension Technology's MotionStar magnetic wireless system, which they are now using along with their proprietary CLOVIS P.A. and facial puppetry system. New features of the system include real time shadows, and a joystick which enables the director to move and pan the camera on a character during a shot. Medialab will soon be launching a new character for Nickelodeon U.K., which will join their "Bert the Fish," a motion capture character already airing on the network.

Downstairs in the Electronic Garden, SIGGRAPH's showcase for innovative new experimental projects and techniques, a group of Japanese performers and technicians presented Cyber Bunraku, a blending of the modern technology of motion capture animation with the ancient traditional art of Bunraku puppetry. Created by Kiyoshi Arai from Central Research Laboratory in Tokyo, this system used a wired metal puppet armature to control the body, and an optical point tracking system to control the facial expressions, in order to translate motion and emotion into original computer generated characters. The result was a creative and refreshingly organic performance.

Hardware

At the concurrent MacWorld Expo in Boston, Microsoft Corp. announced that it will invest $150 million in Apple Computer, a bold business move that will affect users of both systems with more integration and cross-platform development.

For the first time ever, Silicon Graphics offered a dramatic special offer on their Octane O2 R5000 workstation, targeted at individual users and small studios. The system, which normally sells for $7,495, was offered for three days, to SIGGRAPH attendees only, for $4,995. While the marketing team at Silicon Graphics expected that maybe 50 or so people would seize the opportunity, they sold systems faster than they could arrange the orders with vendors. During those three days, a total of 960 systems were ordered, 65 percent of which were first-time customers of Silicon Graphics!

Lambsoft's Smirk software for facial animation.

Infinity Multimedia created a buzz with their patented autostereo 3D display system, which creates a seemingly three-dimensional image without any special glasses or headsets. A far cry from red and blue cellophane lenses, or even polarized filters, this digital technology works on the principle of displaying several images of a scene in rapid succession, each from a slightly different angle, on a very high speed monitor. The result, seen with both eyes, is the illusion of a third dimension that changes as the viewer's head moves laterally. Infinity plans to license the autostereo technology for use in video arcade games, motion-based film rides, computer monitors and home entertainment systems.

VRML

VRML, which stands for Virtual Reality Modeling Language, allows developers to create interactive 3D worlds on the Internet. First proposed at the International WWW Conference in 1994, VRML is finally becoming a reality with interactive 3D web sites such as The Palace cropping up all over the Web. Properly equipped visitors can create their own avatars (CG characters as personas) and settings, and interact in real time with multiples of other incognito users around the world. Most VRML browser software still requires at least 16MB of RAM, extensive memory, and are usually available only for the PC. Some of the latest VRML developments unveiled at SIGGRAPH are:

Blitcom, a company recently formed by VRML innovator Mark Pesce and producer Jan Mallis (former executive producer at Protozoa), to create VRML 3D character based entertainment across the web, unveiled "Bliss.com," their first project using streaming VRML technology. Streaming delivery of VRML animation means viewers see animation *during* downloading, rather than *after* downloading. Meanwhile, at the Microsoft booth, streaming VRML was demonstrated with a project created by Protozoa earlier this year. *Floops,* a seven minute, 22 MB animation that would have taken an hour to download, was displayed instantly with streaming VRML in Microsoft's latest Internet Explorer browser. *Floops,* touted as the first VRML 3D cartoon on the Web, was also showcased in the SIGGRAPH '97 Computer Animation Festival, and can be seen

in Quicktime format in this issue of Animation World Magazine.

Sony debuted Community Place, their new communication software with multimedia user functions conforming to VRML 2.0. The browser and server installed software enables real time navigation through 3D space with full sound, text chat, video images and animation. It is available for Windows 95/NT, and runs in compatibility with Netscape. Sony is currently working with pioneer multimedia artist Rodney Alan Greenblat to create original interactive attractions, in a sort of "online theme park" called Rodney's Chip and Peg Park.

Sven Technologies premiered AvatarMaker 3D 1.0, a new program for creating avatars from scratch, using a palette of pre-existing heads, torsos, limbs and accessories. Avatars created with the software can then be used in any VRML 2.0 compliant virtual world. Available for Windows 95/NT, the package is designed with an intuitive interface that requires no knowledge of programming languages. It retails at $39.95

Platinum Technology presented VRCreator, an authoring tool that enables users to create interactive VRML content with a simple interface. It includes a library of more than 1,000 "drag and drop" components like 3D models, and JavaScript behaviors. VRCreator Personal Edition is available for $129., with a free sample Learning Edition available on the Platinum web site.

Is VRML just the next Java craze? All of this virtual reality cyberspace activity inspired Ralph Bakshi to dream up a whole storyline for Spicy City, his animated series on HBO. In an episode titled "Love is A Download," he depicts a story of two people who choose to have a relationship solely interacting through their avatars on the Internet. What's next?

Virtual Reality

What is virtual reality these days anyway? From flight simulators to glorified interactive video games, virtual reality, or, VR, is claiming to be everywhere. SIGGRAPH is more of a showcase for VR developers' tools than actual entertainment applications (go to IAAPA for that). A couple of the coolest things going in VR at the show were:

MuSE Technologies showcased Continuum, a system for real time collaboration which is being called "a quantum leap in human collaboration over networks." What does this mean in English? Continuum allows multiple users to work together from different geographic locations in shared multimedia environments, for applications in science, industry, education and entertainment. MuSE, which stands for Multidimensional User-oriented Synthetic Environment, is one of the systems being integrated at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) to collaborate with researchers at other facilities in designing lander design technology for future missions to Mars.

Downstairs in the Electric Garden, Vivid Group displayed their patented Mandala System for real time video interaction in virtual reality games. This system operates without any of the wires, data gloves, headwear or other encumberments often found in these types of entertainment applications. What this means is that users are able to see themselves, not avatars, on screen, and interact in real time with computer generated, animated environments. Mandala is currently being used in entertainment complexes in the U.S., Korea, Ireland, Finland, China and Australia.

Rich Animation used the Animo system for *The Swan Princess 2*, and is currently using it in the production of *The Swan Princess 3* and *The King and I*.

Recruiting/Education

As expected, SIGGRAPH was a hotbed of recruiting activity for digital effects and animation companies. Recruiting was the main interest of animation production exhibitors such as Pacific Data Images, Pixar, Walt Disney Feature Animation and DreamQuest, who took in hundreds of resumes and showreels at their booths while everyone else was busy pitching products. On the fourth day, throngs of resume-wielding artists waited in line for over three hours just to get into the Career Center Job Fair. Among the crowd must have been a number of ex-staffers from the recently shutdown Warner Digital, as well as many of the 31 employees laid off from Digital Domain the week before SIGGRAPH began. More than 35 companies were vying for the talent's attention at the Job Fair, with plenty others scouting the rows of corkboards overflowing with resumes.

Can you say guerilla marketing? Softimage has established a "campus rep" program which will place full-time paid employees of Softimage on college campuses, to promote the products, and scout student work for publication. . . . Softimage Education Program (SEP) premiered a reduced $1,500 student subscription price to Softimage 3D, and a $5850 price for the Digital Alpha XL Workstation. . . Softimage's latest Student Animation Contest is now accepting submissions, and is offering $83,000 in cash and prizes.

On the schools front, Sheridan College, USC, and Cal Arts have all recently vamped up their computer animation facilities. Ringling School of Art & Design seems to have a very strong program, with three excellent computer animated student films in the SIGGRAPH '97 Computer Animation Festival.

In Production:

Walt Disney Feature Animation, with ten films in various stages of production, is already well underway with animation on the CG feature Dinosaur. At their gallery-style booth at SIGGRAPH, they showed off some artwork from a new "Nutcracker Prince" computer animated sequence for Fantasia 2000. Their studios in Los Angeles, Orlando and Paris are working on traditional animation and CG effects for Kingdom of the Sun, Mulan and Tarzan. Disney Feature's recruiters were scouting the ranks of digital artists, pushing Atlantis, the next animated feature in line by inviting talented artists to join them as they "take on the next millennium."

An actor demonstrating the Polhemus system.

Plugging away on their five picture deal with Disney, Pixar is quietly working on A Bug's Life, a fully computer animated feature due in theaters Fall 1998, and the much anticipated sequel, Toy Story II, scheduled for a direct to video release sometime in 1999. Pixar and Disney are already working with Mattel in developing the toy and merchandise line for both films. Ever so timely, Mattel president and CEO Jill Barad recently joined Pixar's board of directors.

Pacific Data Images showed some concept artwork from Antz, their CG feature film in production for DreamWorks. No, Antz with a "z", is not a misspelling. It's the recently copyrighted title for the film. To handle the volume of character modeling needed for Antz, PDI recently formed an alliance with Viewpoint DataLabs to contract out modeling work by shipping actual sculptures to the facility for computer digitizing. This working relationship will enable PDI staff to focus on the animation process.

Warner Bros. Feature Animation has begun production on Iron Giant, which will be partially CG animation. Get the full story in this month's edition of Animation World News.

"Love is a Download," an episode of Ralph Bakshi's *Spicy City* which draws upon the age of virtual interaction

Looking Ahead

The organizers of Imagina, Europe's answer to SIGGRAPH, seized the opportunity to put out a call for projects and announce programs for the Imagina '98 festival/conference/trade show, which will be held March 4-6 in Monaco. Knowing it's never too soon to be thinking ahead, SIGGRAPH was also promoting their 1998 conference, scheduled for July 19-24 in Orlando, Florida. SIGGRAPH will return to Los Angeles in 1999. How much things will have changed by then!?! In addition to the conference, SIGGRAPH's local chapters hold many events throughout the year. For information on the SIGGRAPH chapter nearest you, visit http://www.siggraph.org

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine.

The Digital Studio Challenge: A Catch 22

Keeping up to speed with today's ultra-new, ultra-cool technology is a daunting task. We asked four leaders in the field to answer, "What are the largest challenges you face everyday running a digital studio/facility?" Representatives from Rhythm & Hues, Fantôme, Neurones Animation and Pacific Data Images all replied.

Time and time again the experts all agree that the continual push to upgrade to the newest technology and then integrate it back into the system proves to be the largest challenge. Oh, yes, and finding incredibly talented people and keeping them happy and creative also adds a few headaches!

The "7 x 24 uptime" nature of production makes implementing growth and other changes difficult. - Mark Kirk, PDI

John Hughes, President, Rhythm & Hues Studio

Rhythm and Hues is an animation studio with clients in the television, commercial, feature film, theme park and video game industries. We do the Coca Cola Polar Bears and have won the Academy Award for Best Visual Effects for our animation of the talking animals in Babe.

The main challenges I face are keeping everyone focused on being creative, attracting a steady supply of "A" quality work for the studio, and building a working environment that is nurturing and conducive to good work.

Georges Lacroix, President, Fantôme

Fantôme is a digital studio, specializing in 3D computer animation. The largest challenges that we are confronted with when running the studio are:

• Hiring people who can bring their creativity and a real dedication to the 3D area.

• The constant training of staff in order to maintain our high level of quality.

• The continual upgrading of software and maintaining the unique production line for 3D series that we have created.

• The constant gathering of information to pass onto our R&D (research and development) department, regarding the industry's never-ending upgrading of software and hardware.

And, despite all of that, trying to produce good movies!

Sebastien Dohogne, Gabby Project Leader, Neurones Animation

Neurones is now one of the biggest 3D/2D companies in Europe. We also have an animation studio in Korea. The Neurones group is composed of the following studios:

• In Liege, Belgium: Neurones Animation, R&D and real-time 3D animation.
• In Luxembourg: 2D productions, pre-production, inking, and post-production.
• In Angoulême, France: inking, special effects, scanning, shooting, compositing, story-boarding and layouts.
• In Seoul, Korea: 2D animation
• In Longwy, France: inking

We are faced with extremely fast growth, and the communication of information and the coordination of materials between studios is one of our biggest challenges. Everybody has to receive the work on time and the instructions must be as clear as possible, in order to avoid wasting time on phoning, mailing, emailing and faxing. Our production schedules and budgets are tight so each production day is a challenge.

In Liege, Belgium, we produce cyberactors which are cartoon-like 3D characters evolving in real-time. The project is called Gabby and was developed by the R&D department of Neurones. We have to produce 3D characters for our customers in a very short time period. Furthermore, these characters speak in real-time with the public at fairs, events, meetings, etc. on low-end SGI computers. Therefore, we

have to build 3D characters with their environment with a maximum of 4500 polygons within 2 or 3 weeks. Despite that, the characters have to be perfect. They have to move well, and we have to reach at least 15 frames per second for lip synchronization. Each time, this is a big challenge for the whole 3D team which includes: 2 3D-Animators, 3 modelers, 1 software integrator and 1 tester.

We are faced with extremely fast growth, and the communication of information and the coordination of materials between studios is one of our biggest challenges. - Sebastien Dohogne, Neurones Animation

Mark Kirk, Technical Director for Systems, Pacific Data Images

Managing the technology of Pacific Data Images is certainly a challenging task for everyone on our team. The last two years have been a tremendous period of growth at PDI due to both the expansion of our visual effects/commercial group and the Antz feature production. So, one of the primary responsibilities is planning and implementing this growth, with all of its ramifications, while maintaining a robust environment to support production. For example, the last year has seen the introduction of over 200 new computer systems to PDI. The timely preparation and deployment of these systems is critical in itself. However, an important side-effect of this has been the necessary growth of our network. Expanding PDI's specialized, high-performance LAN (local area network) in the face of such rapid growth is a significant design challenge.

The "7 x 24 uptime" nature of production makes implementing growth and other changes difficult. Planning, preparation, and scheduling are extremely crucial. When we are afforded the rare opportunity to make some major change, it must be done quickly and without error. Technology also requires talented people to manage it. PDI is fortunate to have a superb systems group, but continued growth fuels the search for additional systems administrators. The dramatic shortage of skilled systems administrators makes expanding our staff difficult. All studios are facing this problem.

Everything we do must further our end goal of providing a stable and powerful environment for the animators. We never want technology to become a bottleneck for our creativity.

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San Diego's Comic Con: The King of All Cons

by Scott Brick

If you've never been to a comic book convention, I heartily recommend the experience. It's a singular adventure that everyone should have at least once. The faint-hearted may choose to start out with one of the smaller events, attended only by a few thousand folks and one or two pros to justify the ticket prices. Those who want to dive head-first into the experience, however, should start at the top: San Diego's Comic Con International, a staggering press of humanity that's affectionately referred to as the King of all Cons.

Costumed Marvel characters entertained attendees of Comic Con '97 in San Diego. Characters © Marvel Entertainment. Photo courtesy of Comic Con International.

This year's event, the 28th annual, began when the first fan hit the Exhibit Hall at 10:00 a.m. Thursday, July 17th, and officially closed when the last dealer fled the room late the following Sunday. In between, San Diego's Convention Center hosted over 36,000 people, fans and professionals alike, who made the pilgrimage to comics' greatest spectacle from points around the globe. For four furious days, kids got to meet their heroes (or at least someone dressed as a passable replica), sci-fi fans got to see previews of upcoming releases, and collectors young and old got to rummage through back-issue bins to find that ever-elusive Al Capp's Schmoo #2, the one with the Superman cover. Amidst all the frenzy and chaos, editors heard hundreds of article proposals, dozens of comics were solicited as movies or animated projects, and a select handful of properties actually made significant headway into the land called "development."

So, What's Next?

More than anything else, people come to San Diego to discover what they can expect to see in the coming months; be it in comics, films, TV or gaming. Fans especially interested in animation were overwhelmed this year with upcoming releases, many based upon popular comic book titles. Spawn made a huge splash with two bases covered: a live-action film as well as the video release of HBO's animated series. Coming in at 147 minutes, the videotape, released August 5, contains the complete, uncut footage from the first six episodes and is soon to appear in WalMarts and Blockbusters everywhere. HBO also announced that six new Spawn episodes will air in the upcoming year. Said HBO's Marketing Manager, Preston Kevin Lewis, "Quite simply, the phenomenal success of Spawn's first six episodes mandated more."

Marvel Comics made a huge impression at this year's Con, showing why they're the biggest name in the industry. With several animated series already airing (Spider-Man and X-Men on the Fox Kids Network and The Incredible Hulk on UPN),

DC Comics occupied a block of space on the '97 Comic Con showroom floor. Photo courtesy of Comic Con International.

Marvel will also debut *Marvel Super Heroes,* featuring *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man,* in national syndication on the Saban Kids Network in September. And as if that weren't enough, a brand new weekly animated series based upon Marvel's venerable character, *The Silver Surfer,* will join the Fox Kids Network lineup for the '97-'98 season. Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Surfer's creation, the series will preview on Saturdays this fall.

If you've never been to a comic book convention, I heartily recommend the experience.

Men In Black (MIB) completed a cyclical odyssey at this year's Con. Having begun as a Malibu comic book back in 1991, the live-action film opened in July of this year. *MIB* begins its third incarnation when it debuts as an animated series this October on the Kids WB!. Once again, the property will see life as a comic book, this time through Marvel. *Men In Black #1* will reprint the original 1991 book. *MIB: The Movie* will adapt the live action feature, and *MIB: Far Cry and Retribution* will follow up on events set forth in the film. The animated series currently has a 13 episode commitment and will air on Saturday mornings.

Another comic book property, *Sam and Max*, has expanded into various other formats. Steve Purcell, a former LucasArts animator, began *Sam and Max* as a black and white comic book ten years ago. A CD ROM soon followed, and this fall will see the premiere of the *Sam and Max* animated series on Fox, produced by the folks at Nelvana. Currently slotted for 13 episodes, each show will be divided into two eleven-minute stories. "The shorter format is good because they can get right into the story and get out and keep the pace going. That's ideal for these characters, because they have short attention spans," says Steve Purcell. However, he does admit that a few of the stories will spill into full half-hour epics by *Sam and Max* standards. So with comic books, CD ROM's and an animated series already covered, what could be next for *Sam and Max*? Says Purcell, "My ideal licensing moment would be a Pez dispenser."

Still Pitching...

Even though they may not have release dates yet, several other projects remain close to fruition. From the comic book end, Shannon Wheeler's *Too Much Coffee Man* seems poised to be an animated gem in the not-too-distant future. The hero of the piece lives by the credo, "No one can escape addiction. Choose yours carefully!" As for Wheeler, he lives by his own credo: *Too Much Coffee Man* is, "more than a comic book, less than a hernia operation."

More than anything else, people come to San Diego to discover what they can expect to see in the coming months.

Another animated project that seems very close to production is Randy Lofficier's *Virtual Meltdown* which promises to be a fascinating film, marrying western artistic styles, an American script and Japanese animation techniques. (For complete details on the project, check out Randy's article "Virtually Melting

***Spawn,* the animated series from HBO Animation.**

Down" in the July issue of Animation World Magazine.) Despite the fact that they're awaiting funding, this project is very nearly realized, with script, production designs, and celebrity involvement already finalized.

Virtual Worlds

Based upon previews at this year's Con, there look to be two huge interactive hits this Christmas season. Marvel Comics previewed their upcoming release, Marvel Interactive by flashing it across a dozen linked video monitors. In it, various Marvel super-heroes do battle in highly-detailed computer generated graphics. When Wolverine slashes Magneto's chest, you can see the shards fly. Hundreds of fans sat glued to the tubes at Marvel's booth, promising that a staggering amount of units will fly out of stores when it debuts this fall.

But as great a reaction as Marvel Interactive got from the fans, the most popular new product out there may wind up being Fox's Virtual Springfield. With the click of a mouse, Simpsons fans can go anywhere they want. Die hard fans will appreciate the attention to detail, with little-known facts revealed in Simpsons episodes being accurately represented in the game. For instance, as dedicated fans know, Apu's Quick-E-Mart has a secret passageway to the roof, cleverly hidden behind the one spot Springfield shoppers never look: the non-alcoholic beer. The game remains true to its roots, allowing you to click on the non-alcoholic beer and find your way to Apu's roof. Set for a fall release, Virtual Springfield looks to be a huge holiday hit.

Sam & Max, characters which debuted in a comic book, will star in their own animated series this fall on Fox. © Nelvana.

The Big Event

As in each of the previous nine years, the highlight of this year's Con was the presentation of the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards, comic books' version of the Oscars. Everyone is welcome at the Eisners, making it a rare chance to see the best talent the industry has to offer gathered in one room. The venerable comics pioneer, Will Eisner, was on hand to congratulate the winners, which included himself! He took home the award for Best Comics-Related Book for Graphic Storytelling. Comics superstar and five-time Eisner winner, Frank Miller delivered the keynote address. He encouraged everyone present to raise the quality of the entire industry, emulating the talents and abilities of Will Eisner himself, bringing it back to the heyday of his time.

Miller emphasized that Eisner was a fountain of comic book knowledge, an invaluable resource that should be tapped by everyone looking to make it in the industry. For his part, Eisner proved himself to be eminently approachable, always willing to take a look at someone's sketches to assess his or her talents. Everywhere you looked for the duration of the Con, there was Eisner, tucked away with a few fans, looking intently at their work, offering advice where appropriate.

What other industry offers this kind of interaction between legends, fans, and aspiring professionals?

It's this kind of personal attention from an industry legend that makes the San Diego Comic Con an exceedingly rare experience. What other industry offers this kind of interaction between legends, fans, and aspiring professionals? It's a phenomena virtually unheard of in the entertainment field. Yet it's commonplace at the Con and it's why so many thousands of people attend and why they continue to make the trek year after year.

Scott Brick is a frequent contributor to Wizard, Sci-Fi Invasion and InQuest magazines. When people ask him what he does, he opts not to say an actor/writer like everyone else in L.A., but will instead claim to be a Holistic Veterinarian. If he tells you this, don't believe him. He also tells people he's Head of Development for Pyrite Films, but that part is true.

The Masters Of Animation: An Unprecedented Opportunity

by Doug Ranney

The city of Seattle hosted it's first-ever animation festival this past Fourth of July weekend. Attendance could have been stronger, but those who were there, fans and animators alike, gave the event across-the-board rave reviews. Animator Marv Newland said it reminded him of Annecy in the late seventies: no hype, no self-promotion, just a heartfelt display of craft and opinion. The low-key nature of the festival, perhaps typical of Seattle, more than made up for its lack of glitz by providing attendees with an unprecedented chance to mingle closely with some of the top animators in the world. Most of the guests made themselves available after their presentations, holding informal Q&A sessions in the lobby of the Seattle Art Museum. Ray Harryhausen lingered for nearly two hours after his session, taking questions, signing autographs, and posing for pictures. Barry Purves did likewise, even allowing fans to pass around and manipulate several of the original stop-motion puppets he had brought along.

Amazing Events

With 25 animators and 29 separate events, where does one begin to summarize this festival? Here are a few examples. On Sunday there was a remarkable panel composed of Mamoru Oshii, Rene Laloux, Marv Newland, Igor Kovalyov, Craig Bartlett, Bill Plympton, David Silverman, Jim Blashfield and Maurice Noble. You could hardly ask for a wider cross-section of animation backgrounds and styles. At times, a question from the audience would spark an interchange among the panel members, leading to the somewhat comical sight of Rene Laloux posing a question in French that was translated into English and re-translated into Japanese for Mamoru Oshii, whose response in Japanese was translated into English and.. you get the idea. While the panel members disagreed about many things, they concurred that commercial distribution remains a big problem for animation. Oshii maintained that even in Japan, the domestic audiences prefer Disney films, and regard their own Japanese anime as somewhat disreputable. Naturally, independents Marv Newland and Bill Plympton know all about the difficulties of getting their work seen, but even Maurice Noble had some marketing horror stories about the later work he and Chuck Jones did together.

Marv Newland said it reminded him of Annecy in the late seventies: no hype, no self-promotion, just a heartfelt display of craft and opinion.

On Monday, an impressive panel of stop-motion animators was assembled, including Bruce Bickford, Stephen Holman, Barry Purves, Henry Selick, Ray Harryhausen, David Anderson, and Janice Findlay. The dominant theme was the increasing competition stop-motion animators are facing from computer animation. Naturally, there was plenty of criticism of the shortcomings of CGI. Barry Purves, in particular, waxed bitter about putting in nine months of puppet work for Tim Burton's Mars Attacks!, only to see it thrown out in favor of CGI. Even Burton collaborator Henry Selick criticized Burton's decision, pointing out that you can't do a real homage to cheesy Fifties sci-fi stop-motion by using hyper-realistic computer animation. The general consensus was that, Nick Park notwithstanding, puppet animation is getting harder and harder to sell.

One of the biggest draws of the festival was the Sunday night

Simpsons show with director David Silverman. He talked the audience through two hours of clips, including some early proto-*Simpsons* work. Big crowd-pleasers were a compilation of "couch gags," and a censored "Itchy and Scratchy" sequence. It's hard to believe, but there are some things beyond the pale even for Itchy & Scratchy, in this case involving chewing his own leg off to escape a trap. Silverman laid out the entire history of the show and talked the audience through the production process of a typical episode. After experiencing two and a half hours of his intense, quick-witted personality, it's easier to see how Silverman's show maintains its creative edge. Even during the Q&A period, he never let up, and more than one insipid question was answered with a tart, though not nasty, response.

Looney Tunes veteran Maurice Noble entertains an attentive crowd in the Seattle Art Museum lobby. Photo courtesy of Susan Purton/Scarecrow Video.

The Old Guard

The wide-ranging roster of attending animators might be grouped into a few major categories. The Old Guard included Disney veteran Marc Davis, layout artist Maurice Noble, and stop-motion wizard Ray Harryhausen; all gracious, entertaining, and unanimous in their dislike of most commercial animation being done today. Davis kicked off the festival, showing some of his work and narrating slides of his designs for Disneyland attractions, including "Pirates of The Caribbean" and "The Haunted Mansion." Maurice Noble filled in for an ailing Chuck Jones at the last minute. Since the screenings were already set, Noble ad-libbed his way through Jones' work, some of which he had not worked on. In the end, he completely charmed the audience, and his off-the-cuff presentation led him to some offbeat topics that probably would not have been otherwise covered.

As a long line formed for Ray Harryhausen's program, a pleasant sight was Harryhausen and Henry Selick chatting in the lobby. It was the kind of sight that proved to be common throughout the weekend. There's no doubt that the animators enjoyed sitting in on each other's programs as much as the fans did. As Marv Newland put it, they all had a great time hanging with each other and just "making the scene." The fans were by no means kept at arms length, either. One attendee, whose experience was not unique, related how he struck up a conversation with Harryhausen when he found himself seated next to him in the audience of another animator's event. When Harryhausen's screening of *Jason and The Argonauts* ran long, he graciously took questions in the lobby afterwards. This was in contrast to Marc Davis, whose corporate handlers hustled him out of the museum like a rock star.

Young Whipper-snappers

In contrast to the old-timers were the younger, and employed, animators, such as David Silverman and *Hey Arnold's* Craig Bartlett. These guys are young, successful,

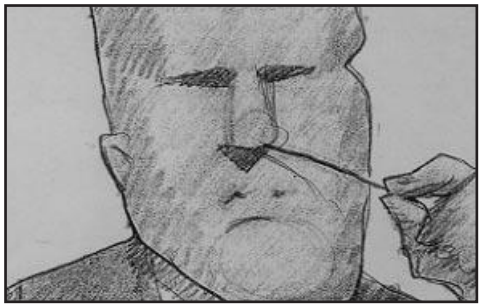
Mark Gustafson presented his stop-motion short, *Bride of Resistor*. © Will Vinton Studios.

confident, enthusiastic, and irreverent. Silverman fairly crackles with intensity and wit, while Bartlett radiates upbeat energy. Both had great fun goofing on the "Masters of Animation" theme, suggesting that others bow to them and respond, "Yes, Master." Despite the banter, though, they exhibited a sincere awe of the aforementioned Old Guard. Mark Gustafson screened *Mr. Resistor* and *Bride of Resistor*, with engaging stories of life at Will Vinton Studios. Devo co-founder Mark Mothersbaugh presented his musical scores and jingles for animated shows, while Stephen Holman screened his hard-to-describe hybrid *Life With Loopy* segments.

A pleasant sight was Harryhausen and Henry Selick chatting in the lobby....the animators enjoyed sitting in on each other's programs as much as the fans did.

The Independent Presence

The Independents included Bruce Bickford, Jim Blashfield, Rose Bond, Janice Findlay, Joan Gratz, Ruth Hayes, Marv Newland, and Bill Plympton. All are doing, or have done, interesting personal films, with Blashfield, Newland and Plympton being the most commer-



***Nosehair,* a sequence featured in Bill Plympton's *Mondo Plympton.* Animator**

cially successful. Bill Plympton is as tireless as usual, screening Mondo Plympton and working on yet another one-man feature, although this time he's using traditional cel techniques to increase his production speed. Also in this category, but somewhat distinct, are the Brits David Anderson and Barry Purves. Both have created some terrifically impressive shorts, especially Purves' Achilles - a stop-motion tour de force with a decidedly un-commercial homosexual theme. Poor Barry had the misfortune to be scheduled at 8 PM on Friday opposite the Fourth of July fireworks, so his program drew (it must be said) an embarrassingly small crowd. onetheless, the jet-lagged animator screened some beautiful works, and thoroughly engaged the audience with his passion for the art form.

Friday's biggest crowd turned out for Mamoru Oshii who screened his early independent work, Angel's Egg. Oshii, speaking through his translator, went to great lengths to underscore what a flop the film was in Japan. He claimed that it kept him from getting work for years, and thanked the audience for not falling asleep during the screening. When asked what he thought of the festival, the shy director replied only that he hated traveling, he missed his dogs, and his producer had forced him to attend. We think he was joking. Despite his less-than-outgoing nature, Oshii's screening of Ghost in The Shell on Saturday was a big draw.

Animation director Jack Stokes made an extremely rare public appearance with an uncommon screening of *Yellow Submarine.*

In a sense it was an "anti-Animation Celebration," in that it was all about the works themselves, with practically zero focus on "the industry."

Rene Laloux seemed every inch the French elder statesman, holding forth on a variety of subjects. The voluble director sometimes rambled on in French for minutes at a time, leaving his dazed interpreter to try to sum up his remarks afterward. He brought along the original version of Fantastic Planet, much different than the edited and dubbed version seen in America, as well as the rarely seen Time Masters. Martin Rosen had two presentations, screening both The Plague Dogs and Watership Down. Animation director Jack Stokes made an extremely rare public appearance with an equally rare screening of Yellow Submarine. Gerald Potterton had two presentations, including the festival-ending screening of Heavy Metal.

All in all, there was just about everything for which an animation fan could wish. In a sense it was an "anti-Animation Celebration," in that it was all about the works themselves, with practically zero focus on "the industry." Festival organizer Norm Hill believes that one is unlikely to see another program of this size anytime soon- anywhere. It's a real shame that the crowds weren't better, but it was Seattle on a beautiful holiday weekend, after all. And the event was a first-time effort at that. Not one single event was a clinker, and even the rookie projection room screw-ups at the Art Museum had serendipitous side-benefits. Nearly every program ran long, which led to all those wonderfully intimate Q&A sessions in the lobby. Considering how influential American cartoons are worldwide, it's odd that there really isn't a regular, honest-to-God animation festival in the United States. Neither Annecy nor Ottawa have much to do with animation in France or Canada...maybe Seattle could become their American counterpart. Let's all hope so, because years from now, the animators and fans who attended the 1997 Masters of Animation will still be talking about it.

Barry Purves with the working model from his short film, *Next!.* Photo courtesy of Susan Purton/Scarecrow Video.

Doug Ranney lives in Seattle. He created and operated The Whole Toon Catalog, *which is now managed by Facets Multimedia.*

AnimExpo'97: An Introduction to the Rising Tiger

by Detelina Kreck

First-timer AnimExpo `97 in Seoul, Korea was a success. The exposition was a spectacular domestic event, a commercial and cultural achievement. It was targeted at the general public, especially children, and included interactive games, popular animation characters starring on several stages, and big video walls showing the latest and most highly-rated Korean children's series. The main screenings took place in the Seoul Art Center situated in the heart of Seoul's entertainment area between the trendiest cafes, pubs and karaoke bars, a district of colleges and universities. Young people between 16 and 20 years-old queued up for hours to get a ticket, which is not surprising in a city of 11 million, especially after such a strong publicity campaign from main sponsor, the second largest television channel, MBC. The organizers reported a turnover of roughly $700,000 U.S. from the ten day exposition at the Seoul Olympic Park. Tickets cost $6 U.S. for children and $8 U.S. for adults. MBC said, "It is an enormous undertaking for economical and cultural development, bringing industry, international filmmakers and domestic audiences closest together." Besides MBC, other sponsors included, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Information, the Korean Cultural and Art Foundation and the Software Industry Association.

The Awards

The International Jury awarded the Golden Damby Prize ($20,000 U.S.) to Oscar winner *Quest*, produced by Thomas Stellmach and directed by Tyron Montgomery, with worldwide distribution by Joachim Kreck Film, Germany, for its deep philosophical meaning and humanistic idea. The First Prize in the Ecology & Pollution Theme Category went to the German cartoon *When the Wind Subsides* by Serbian filmmaker Vuk Jevremovic. Special Prizes for outstanding films were given to: *Limbo* by Beriou (France); *1895* by Priit Parn (Estonia); *Bavel's Book* by Koji Yamamura (Japan); *Jam the Housesnail* by Tatsutoshi Nomura (Japan); *1995 - 1995* by Paul de Nooijer (The Netherlands); a domestic commercial *Hana Bank* by Sun Woo Entertainment (Korea); and a debut cartoon, Mozaffar Sheydaei's *Fish in Soil* (Iran). All of these films shared the respectable amount of $100,000 U.S. The Merit Prize went to a Korean black & white cartoon *Open* by Dong Hee Jung, a gentle expression of the Jury's will to support domestic art films which are nearly non-existent. The UNICEF Prize was awarded to *Mons the Cat* by Piotr Sapegin (Norway).

Thomas Stellmach and Tyron Montgomery's Oscar-winning short, *Quest* took home yet another prize; this one the $20,000 (U.S.) Golden Damby Prize, at AnimExpo in Seoul.

The exposition was a spectacular domestic event of commercial and cultural success.

Each Jury member (Kihachiro Kawamoto, Japan, Dan McLaughlin, U.S.A, Barbel Neubauer, Germany, Kyung Sup Shin, Korea and Yang Ding Xien, China) awarded their own Special Prize, a clever decision that neutralized the different artistic tastes of the jury. These prizes were awarded to: *Yankale* by Gil Alkabetz, Germany; *Tale About The Cat and the Moon* by Pedro Serrazina, Portugal; *The End of the World in Four Seasons* by veteran Dutch animator Paul Driessen, made at the National Film Board of Canada; *Achilles* by Barry J.C. Purves (U.K.); and *Flatworld* by Daniel Greaves (U.K.) ($2,000 U.S. for each). With three awards, Germany was the most successful international country for the first time and stole the show from the old animation bastion, the U.K.

Vuk Jevremovic's When *the Wind Subsides* was awarded the First Prize in the Ecology & Pollution Theme Category.

who has dominated the international animation scene for years.

Among 311 entries from 25 countries, the International Selection Committee (Taku Furokawa, Japan, Chris Robinson, Canada, Detelina G. Kreck, Germany, Erica Russell, U.K. and Kim Sae Hoon, Korea) selected 88 films for the main competition program. Only films without major awards from other festivals were allowed to compete, which led to a festival joke, kidding about "a festival of losers." Nevertheless, several awarded shorts were invited to attend the out of competition program.

With three awards, Germany was the most successful international country for the first time ...

Unique Korea

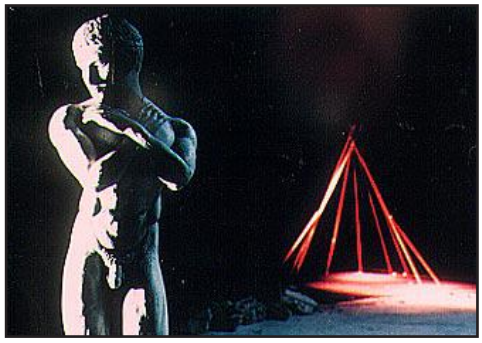
Never forget your business cards in Korea! In a strong hierarchical society everybody has to know their right place. Never say, "Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee called, please call back," because everybody's last name is Kim and Lee! You are welcome to enjoy your stay, but never complain. It's a bad omen, even worse than the number 4. You cannot find a 4th floor in a hotel or in a public building. They ignore it.

The organizing committee, managed by Daniel Lee, had to resolve a few problems. The primary one was obtaining permission from the local censors to exhibit erotic films and films with homosexual messages. It isn't easy to imagine how difficult a problem this can be for a more closed country with a traditional, structured society. You have to comprehend traditional Korean society and modern culture to understand that it is a matter of long historical development, of religious dogma forbidding even the slightest expression of pornographic or homosexual aesthetics in art. Korean society follows its own laws based on Confucian ethics which say that you have to be friendly to guests and "never lose face," which means answers like, "I don't know what you are speaking about," when asked uncomfortable questions.

Behind a few art films hides a powerful animation industry of big, professional studios which employ 650, 1500 or more animators, mainly female.

Despite Seoul's heavy traffic, dominated by the domestic Hyundai and Daewoo cars, and local communication problems, the few international guests met a country of rapid economical and industrial development on all levels. It has a right to be called the rising tiger. Behind a few art films hides a powerful animation industry of big, professional studios which employ 650, 1500 or more animators, mainly female. They use self-made software and also perform a lot of hand-drawn animation. They specialize in hand-drawn animation because puppet, clay and other alternative techniques are not considered as trendy. A rich drawing tradition is the base for the elaborate skills of the young girls working in Korea. The working week is ten hours per day, six days per week. Nearly all major American television studios produce their shows in Korea. A few Europeans, like Le Studio Ellipse, also send their work to Korea. These studios are seeking good work at reasonable prices, and that's what they get for sure. It is worthwhile to invest money in this country. The product is of uncompromising quality. Whether or not this market stays stable is doubtful; the cold war between North and South Korea continues. One can smell it in the air. In two years time, the next Expo has ambitions to enter ASIFA, and to gain even more international grandeur and appeal.

***1995 - 1995*, Paul de Nooijer's film which chronicles war destruction in Europe, was awarded a special prize.**



Films containing erotic and homosexual material, such as Barry Purves' *Achilles*, had to be cleared with local censors for exhibition at the festival.

Detelina Grigorova-Kreck is a producer, director and distributor based in Wiesbaden, Germany. She has served on a number of International Animation Festival Juries and Selection Committees. In the early 1980s, she was in charge of programs for the World Animated Film Festival in Varna.

Animation in the NFTVA

by Steve Bryant and Elaine Burrows

The NFTVA is The National Film & Television Archive in the United Kingdom. The archive was founded in 1936 with the mission "to maintain a national repository of films of permanent value." This expansive collection can seem a little daunting. However, this guide will clarify the collections and make using their animation and animation-related resources easy.

Film Vaults at the The J. Paul Getty Conservation Centre, National Film and Television Archive (NFTVA), British Film Institute (BFI). Photo courtesy of the BFI.

The Television Collection

Animation made for television is not the subject of a specific acquisitions gallery but exists in the Archive's collection as part of the overall television holdings.

Traditionally, animation for television has been particularly associated with children's programming. Even Wallace And Gromit is scheduled to attract a young audience. In recent years, though, adult-oriented animation, such as the work of Jan Svankmajer and the Brothers Quay has found an outlet on Channel 4, particularly in the late-night slot, Fourmations. This is interesting because much of the contents of this series is material not originally intended for, or commissioned by television, though there are also documentaries on animators made specifically for television that are included.

The Archive acquires materials in two ways - by recording off-air to preservation standard and by donation of material from the television companies. The former method applies to British commercial television and has operated since 1985, being funded by the companies themselves through statutory provision. About 25% of ITV, 20% of Channel 4 and 15% of Channel 5 are recorded. The ITV recordings include regular examples of children's programs, including animation and the Channel 4 recordings include all of Fourmations. Regular recordings of complete days of output also capture examples of animation, both in children's slots and in late-night transmissions such as Beavis and Butthead.

The archive holds roughly 2,000 animated titles of one kind or another.

Acquisition by donation, from all television companies including the BBC, ensures the addition of "classic" children's animation, such as the Watch With Mother programs. Particularly, well represented are the works of Cosgrove Hall, which was associated with Thames Television. This material was acquired by both recording and donation.

The General Animation Collection

The NFTVA gives priority to the acquisition of British material and, while including numerous American, European and other productions, the collection is primarily weighted toward British product. In addition to the Television Acquisitions section, there are two other sections - Features and Documentary. Both of these sections acquire material for the Archive from corporate and individual donors, and both may seek out or be offered animated films. The archive holds roughly 2,000 animated titles of

The J. Paul Getty Conservation Centre, National Film and Television Archive (NFTVA), British Film Institute (BFI). Photo courtesy of the BFI.

one kind or another.

Throughout film history, British animation has been used not just to entertain children, but to educate, to instruct and to sell. Consequently, the collection includes numerous public health films, political propaganda films, advertising films, and so on, made for both cinema and television formats, as well as what is generally referred to as cartoons. Many of these films have been acquired in their original film form, though acquisition by direct recording from television (as described above) means that, increasingly, productions are held only on videotape and in the versions in which they were transmitted.

The NFTVA gives priority to the acquisition of British material and ... the collection is primarily weighted toward British product.

Access to the Collection

There is currently no separate listing of the NFTVA's animation collection, though it is possible to search our holdings by title and by the name of animators and/or directors. Archive staff are happy to assist in this.

Because of the essential priority given to the Archive's preservation function, access can only be provided to films for which the NFTVA holds material additional to its preservation masters. While 100% of the productions acquired through direct recording are available (generally, therefore, films made in the last ten or fifteen years), the percentage is much lower for the rest of the collection. Part of the problem here is the cost of duplicating successive frame Technicolor originals and other color systems, though the quality of new prints produced is extremely high. If the researcher is prepared to wait, arrangements can usually be made to copy material in order to produce access copies.

Research and study access to the Archive's collection is organized by the NFTVA's Research Viewings section, with viewings taking place at the British Film Institute's premises at 21 Stephen Street, London. The pressure on viewing facilities is such that there is often a waiting period of two to three weeks, so appointments are essential. Viewing fees are currently £10.00 plus VAT per hour for researchers and £5.00 plus VAT for students.

Loans for off-premises uses or any use of extracts in new productions can be arranged through BFI Films (see below). In most cases, the potential user will have to obtain permission from copyright owners before material can be released.

BFI Films

The British Film Institute's BFI Films division includes the section formerly known as BFI Film & Video Distribution, which controls films for which the BFI owns (usually) UK distribution rights. There is a catalogue (1994) of the 500 or so animated titles available from BFI Films. BFI Films is now providing access to titles in the NFTVA collection for off-premises use, such as screenings at festivals.

Contacts

The National Film & Television Archive (a Division of the British Film Institute), 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 2LN. Telephone 0171.255.1444. Fax 0171.580.7503. For general information on the Archive's holdings, contact the Cataloguing section; via e-mail, use olwen.terris@bfi.org.uk. To make research or study access arrangements, contact the Research Viewings section; via e-mail, use kathleen.dickson@bfi.org.uk.

The collection includes numerous public health films, political propaganda films, advertising films ... as well as what is generally referred to as cartoons.

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Steve Bryant is Keeper of Television for the NFTVA.

Elaine Burrows is in charge of preserving animation for NFTVA.

NEWS

Animation World News

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

Business

Activision To Acquire Raven Software. *The ever-expanding Los Angeles-based game developer and publisher, Activision, has inked an agreement to acquire Madison, Wisconsin-based Raven Software. The 40-employee developer of computer games, such as Heretic and Hexen, will have become a wholly owned subsidiary of Activision by the end of August.*

Paragon Acquires Lacewood. *After months of making headlines with a power struggle in a deal gone sour, Toronto-based Paragon Entertainment Corp. has taken control of Ottawa-based animation company, Lacewood Group. Lacewood, owing Paragon an estimated U.S. $1.8 million, attempted to pull itself out of debt by arranging an investment by Canadian-descent actor Leslie Nielsen, but was unable to come up with the funds when Nielsen decided to avoid the legal complications of becoming involved in the situation. Though originally planned to be a partnership rather than a takeover, Paragon's final acquisition of Lacewood fits into the entertainment company's plan to include animation in its children's programming activities.*

NY Digital Studios Form Alliance. *An aggregation of people and companies from the New York digital production community have announced the formation of a new, professional organization called the East Coast Digital Consortium (ECDC). The stated goals of the organization, as defined by a group of founding partners from member companies, are: business development, standardizing of operations, education and the fostering of talent in the area. Founding member Amy Jupiter, who recently left 14 years in Los Angeles to take on an executive producer post at Blue Sky Studios in Ossining, New York, describes ECDC as a "voice" for the emerging east coast digital production community, and a means of fostering growth. Ultimately, ECDC plans to become a non-profit organization, with affiliate members from visual effects companies, educational institutions, government organizations, industry suppliers, individual artists and producers. Member companies so far include Blue Sky Studios, Click 3X, Curious Pictures, Image Design, Manhattan Transfer, MacKenzie Cutler, MASS.ILLUSION, Nice Shoes, Nicholson NY, NYU Center for Advanced Technology, Post Perfect, RGA Digital Studios (R/Greenberg), Sam Edwards Group, SMA, Spontaneous Combustion, The Tape House Co., and Zero Degrees Kelvin. ECDC's introductory events already scheduled include: a post-SIGGRAPH presentation, and a seminar at Showbiz Expo East in September. All of these events will take place in New York. For information on ECDC, visit http://www.ecdc.org.*

Comics Case Denied Supreme Hearing. *The United States Supreme Court has denied Michael Diana's petition for a writ of certiorari, thus ending his three-year battle to have his conviction for publishing and distributing obscenity overturned. The comic artist, whose work contains graphic imagery and commentary on strong subject matter, was convicted in 1994 for publishing and distributing what was deemed to be "obscenity," and has since been working with the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to overturn the conviction. Diana, whose legal fees and fines are thus far in excess of $50,000 is currently serving his probationary and community service sentence in Long Island, New York. For more information on the case and the CBLDF, read Susan Alston's article, "Censorship in Comics: Is This The United States?" published in the July issue of Animation World Magazine.*

Cinar Completes Publisher Acquisition. *Cinar Films, Inc. has completed the acquisition of Carson-Dellosa Publishing Company, Inc. and its affiliates Unique Collating Services, Inc. and The Wild Goose Company. The deal, which was announced earlier*

this month (Animation Flash 7/9/97), and closed this week, is valued at roughly $40.5 million, with an exchange of U.S. $24.5 million in cash and 465,285 Class B Subordinated Voting Shares of Cinar Films, Inc.

People

Hollywood Shuffle

Simon Graty *has been named executive director of original programming for* **The Disney Channel**'s *new production office in New York. His responsibilities will include overseeing New York-based Disney Channel original productions, such as the upcoming 1998 series PB & J, being produced by Jumbo Pictures. Graty was previously a development and programming executive for Children's Television Workshop (CTW) and, prior to that, for Nickelodeon UK. . . .* **Pacific Data Images** *(PDI) has brought on animation producer* **Cindy Cosenzo** *to manage commercial production for their Palo Alto, California studio. She was formerly a producer at Pizazz Pictures in London. . . . .***Albert Miller** *has been hired to teach fundamentals*

Sally Bell will take over for John Claster as president of Claster Television.

*of animation, in the new four-year animation program at Woodbury University. Miller previously taught animation history at the University of Colorado. . . . .***John Claster,** *president of kids TV programming distributor* **Claster Television** *for nearly 25 years, is leaving his post to pursue other projects in the industry. His sister, and current Executive VP and VP of program development,* **Sally Bell**, *will take his place as president. Claster Television is owned by the toy manufacturer Hasbro. . . .***Andy Lewis**, *a former finance and planning executive for Buena Vista Television, has been hired as Senior VP of* **Warner Bros. Television Animation**. *He will be working directly under Jean MacCurdy, who has been president of Warner Bros. Television Animation since 1992 . . . . Multimedia publisher* **Binary Media Works**, *a sister company to anime distributor Central Park Media, named Matt Ikegawa as Manager of Technology and Katherine Keating as Online Producer . . . . IAAPA (The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, a non-profit organization) has restructured its leadership to be headed by a volunteer board of directors, under chairman Larry Cochran of Six Flags Theme Parks . . .* **Parachute Consumer Products,** *the merchandise licensing division of Parachute Properties, has found two new recruits from the comic world;* **Lee Ann Taylor** *(formerly of Marvel Entertainment) has been named Director of International Licensing, and* **Nel Yomtov** *(formerly of DC Comics) will be Creative Director. . . . .***Steve McBeth** *has announced impending resignation from his post as president of* **Disney Interactive**. *McBeth, who has yet to announce his next move, will be voluntarily joining the ranks of roughly 100 people who were laid off from Disney Interactive during a downsizing in April.*

Cindy Cosenzo takes on producing at PDI.

Places

A Virtual Subway In The Desert. *The New York subway is the subject of a new art exhibit and multimedia installation at The Arizona State University Art Museum in Tempe, Arizona. "Token City" was created by visual artist Muriel Magenta and composer Michael Udow. Viewers to the gallery enter a simulated subway platform in which their videotaped image is merged with the projection of a 3D computer animated subway station. Exhibit related events include a lecture by artist Muriel Magenta on Tuesday, September 9, and a reception for the artists on Saturday, September 20. For information about the exhibit, visit http://asuam.fa.asu.edu/tokencity/token.htm*

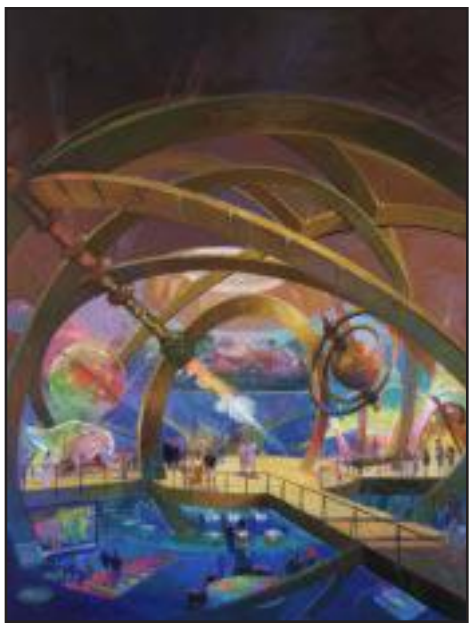
Good-Bye Springfield....Hello Nevada? *While no one is revealing which state the cartoon town of Springfield is in, the presenters of "The Simpsons" have built a life-size replica of the cartoon family's home in Henderson, Nevada. The recently completed, four bedroom, 2,200 square foot home includes details down to family portraits and toothbrushes. The house will not be open to the public as a tourist attraction, but rather will be given away in a promotional contest. During the September 21 season premiere of The Simpsons, the house will be*

awarded to a viewer, in The Simpsons House Giveaway, sponsored by Fox, Pepsi-Cola and the home's builder, architecture firm Kaufman and Broad. Winners will be selected by matching numbers with those printed on selected Pepsi-Cola beverages, or by random drawing. Additional prizes include 100 one-year supplies of Mandarin Orange Slice, 500 Bart Simpson skateboards, and 1,500 *Virtual Springfield* CD-Roms. We can only hope that the lucky enjoy visitors!

The Simpsons' house, from the cartoon, and the life-size replica built in Henderson, Nevada. TM & © 1997 20th Century Fox Film Corp. All Rights Reserved.

Cartoon Restaurant To Open In L.A. Entrepreneurs Steven Scarduzio and John Rosenfield are building what they call a "kiddie Las Vegas" in the middle of Los Angeles. Cartoonsville, as it is named, is a new theme restaurant and entertainment venue for children which combines a hip restaurant, a live variety show, arcade games, and, of course, a large retail facility. The 13,000 square foot attraction will also function as an animation art showcase and gallery. Special events with guest animators and voice talent will also be hosted at the site. Cartoonsville creators are in talks with several rights holders about licensing classic animated properties, but don't expect to be buying Disney merchandise in this boutique. Most of the characters in Cartoonsville are being created specifically for this venue, and some of the merchandise is designed by Sanrio, the Japanese company which created Hello Kitty. The flagship location at the corner of Wilshire Blvd. and Bundy, in Brentwood, Los Angeles, will open in October, and a second location is slated to open in Tokyo in 1998.

Disney Quests For Gaming Market. The Walt Disney Company's Regional Entertainment division will open a new chain of hi-tech family entertainment centers called DisneyQuest, starting in summer 1998 with a flagship 100,000 square foot facility at Walt Disney World, Orlando, Florida. A second DisneyQuest will open summer 1999, in Chicago, and future sites are planned both domestically and internationally. Designed to be an interactive, multimedia entertainment "experience" for visitors, the venues will offer guests opportunities to interact with the entertainment. "Within a two to three hour visit," describes Disney Regional Entertainment president Art Levitt, "guests can embark on adventures that let them actually 'enter the story' and become part of it." Drawing upon classic Disney characters as well as new stories, attractions will include games, rides, motion simulated ridefilms and dining venues, all with appropriately named (and trademarked) titles such as FoodQuest, The Wired Wonderland Cafe and Ventureport. Partnering in the venture are Silicon Graphics, Tandem Computers, Hughes-JVC Technology and American Express. Disney Regional Entertainment was established in 1996, and opened its first location, Club Disney, in Thousand Oaks, California in February 1997.



DisneyQuest conceptual artwork. © Disney. All Rights Reserved.

Films

WB Turns *Iron Giant* Green. *Warner Bros. has given the much-anticipated green light for production to begin on its second animated feature film, Iron Giant. The property is based on the 1968 story, Iron Man by the laureate British poet Ted Hughes. Brad Bird (The Simpsons, The Critic, Family Dog), who has been heading up the long development process, is directing the film, which sources say will be a combination of traditional and computer generated animation. Also attached to the project are producer Allison Abbate, award-winning Broadway and theater producer Des McAnuff, and musician Pete Townsend, who adapted the property into the Iron Man album and musical production in 1989. Production on Iron Giant is slated to take place solely in Warner Bros.' Glendale, California production facility. This news, no doubt, will increase speculation that Warner Bros.' relatively new, multi-million dollar, state of the art London studio will be closing down, as was the fate of the visual effects division, Warner Digital, just last month. Meanwhile, rough animation has been completed on Quest For Camelot, Warner Bros. Feature Animation's debut solo effort, which is due out in summer 1998. Many of the 350 employees working on Quest in Glendale are already moving over to start production on Iron Giant. While there are also rumors of a Space Jam sequel in development, Warner Bros. declined to comment on the project.*

Chuck-I-Mation Now! *What do you get when you cross the animation style of Mr. Bill, the fantastic concepts of Toy Story, and the superhero-parodies of The Tick? Nickelodeon, has the answer in Action League Now!, a series of stop-motion animated shorts which are being shown as part of the Kablam! series on Nickelodeon, as well as in a new theatrical short, currently running in front of the live action feature film Good Burger. Created by Tim Hill, the theatrical short and 13 subsequent fall '97 series segments are animated by David Fain, who is probably known best for his independent short, Oral Hygiene. The shorts feature a technique Nickelodeon has dubbed "chuck-i-mation," a budget-cutting technique which explains the live-action footage of characters being "chucked" or thrown and tossed across the screen. Accompanying Action League Now! on the Kablam series are creator-driven, unusual-technique shorts by Ink Tank (Sniz and Fondue), LunaVox Productions (Prometheus & Bob), Crank it Out! ("Henry and June" bumpers), Federico Vitali (Lava), Mo Willems (The Off-Beats) and Stephen Holman (Life With Loopy). Nickelodeon will premiere the new season of "Kablam!" on October 11, at 8 p.m. (ET/PT).*

A baby doll terrorizes a toy community in *Action League Now!*
Photo by Tom Queally. © Nickelodeon.

Iris Animating Grimm Tales. *Luxembourg's Iris Productions, which recently formed an alliance with Cinevox Productions in Germany, has recently begun production on The Magic Forest, an animated feature based on the classic fairy tale story of Hansel & Gretel. Iris is also working on a series of ten animated shorts based on fairy tales such as "Cinderella," "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Sleeping Beauty" to be packaged for television in programming blocks of varying length. Both productions are slated to be ready in 1998, the year which marks the 100th anniversary of the Brothers Grimm, making it an ideal time to promote productions based on these classic stories.*

Television

Teletoon To Hit The Airwaves. *Canada's first 24 hour animation channel will soon begin broadcasting, in French-speaking territories starting September 8, and in English Canada on October 17. After a three-month, free trial period for all cable subscribers, Teletoon will be offered as part of a multi-channel package through Specialty TV (Cable TV). TeleToon's daily schedule includes four programming blocks: TotToon for pre-schoolers, Kid Toon for children, FamilyToon for all ages and AdultToon for mature audiences. Much of the programming for the channel is provided by TeleToon's shareholders:*

Nelvana, Cinar Films, YTV Canada and The Family Channel. The channel's fall line-up contains roughly 40 percent Canadian produced shows. The network aims for that quotient to reach 60 percent by 2003 by "injecting some $76 million (Canadian) over seven years into Canadian programs of which $42 million will be directed into new productions." Family and adult programming also includes classic cartoons from the Warner Bros. library, which includes Hanna-Barbera. "This is not just another channel or network," anticipates John Riley, president of Teletoon, "TeleToon is a world unto its own, a planet hosting the zany, the unconventional, the wild and the extraordinary as part of everyday life." Some of the animated series scheduled to air on TeleToon include *Home to Rent* (aka *Space Goofs*)from Gaumont, *Captain Star* from Alliance, *Ned's Newt* from Nelvana, *Pond Life* from Candy Guard/Eva Entertainment, *The Simpsons* from Fox, *Duckman* from Klasky Csupo and *Sushi TV*, a collective program of Japanese anime (not to be confused with MTV's "Cartoon Sushi").

Canada's TeleToon's night time line-up includes *Sushi TV*, a Japanese anime variety show from Lacey Entertainment. © Lacey Entertainment.

Kenny, Stan, Lyle and Cartman in *South Park*. © Comedy Central.

Cats & Dogs Reign On Nick. Nicktoons is working on another animated series featuring talking animals. But instead of two angry beavers, this animal has two heads and one body. *CatDog* is a character and series which presents a silly physical comedy in that the main character is half dog, half cat. The premise is that dogs and cats are opposites, which makes for plenty of conflict. Created by Peter Hannan, a cartoonist and children's book illustrator, the series is slated for fall 1998, and will be produced in Nicktoons' new animation studio, now being constructed in Burbank.

***Hercules* To Be Animated Series.** Surprise, surprise. Walt Disney Television Animation is in production on a television series based on the *Hercules* animated feature film. Planned for fall 1998, *Hercules: The Wonder Boy Years* will present the story of Hercules in his teenage years. Actors Tate Donovan (Hercules), James Woods (Hades), Bobcat Goldthwait (Pain) and Matt Frewer (Panic) are cast for the same respective voices, with a handful of new actors and characters being added specifically for the series. Introducing new characters are British comic Eric Idle as "Parentheses," exercise guru Richard Simmons as "Phys Oedipus," and Sandra Bernhard as "Cassandra." The series is being directed by Phil Weinstein, Eddie Hotchins and Bob Kline at Walt Disney Television Animation.

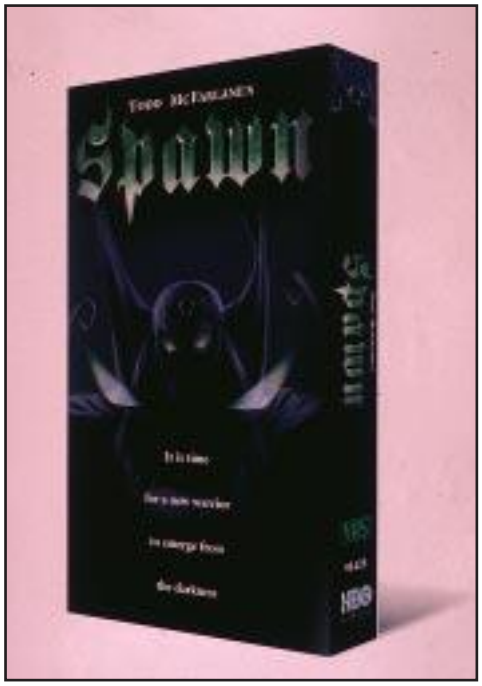
***South Park* Premieres On Comedy Central.** On August 13, Comedy Central unveiled its' outrageous new prime time animated series, *South Park*, giving U.S. audiences a taste of the foul-mouthed humor and endearingly low budget, cut-out animation of creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone. Their privately-commissioned short, *The Spirit of Christmas*, captured the attention of the animation industry when it circulated as a joke holiday greeting card last year. Brian Graden, who commissioned the original short, is executive producer of the series. *South Park* will air Wednesdays at 10 p.m. on Comedy Central.

BMG Video's *Cabbage Patch Kids* series of stop-motion specials. © Original Appalachian Artworks and BMG Video.

Home Video

Cabbage Patch Comeback. Xavier Roberts' collectible plush dolls are starring in a stop-motion animated theatrical feature now playing until the end of August in 130 General Cinemas movie theaters across the

U.S. The Cabbage Patch Kids Film Festival is actually a compilation of three half hour shorts created by Famous Flying Films in London, for Original Appalachian Artworks, the creators of the original Cabbage Patch dolls which hit a peak of popularity in the early 1980s. These little known films rival the production quality of stop-motion features such as *James and the Giant Peach,* with puppets created by expert British modelmakers, Mackinnon & Saunders, and expressive, near-perfect animation directed by Famous Flying Films' Mark Waring. This, along with clever, thoughtful writing by Lorraine Brunning and non-insulting musical ditties by Dave Cooke have talk show host Rosie O'Donnell voluntarily promoting the tapes on the air. On September 30, the most recent of the half hour shorts, entitled *Screen Test,* will be released for the first time on home video by BMG. The other two titles, *The New Kid* and *The Clubhouse,* were released by BMG last year. Titles are available retail for $12.98 each (U.S. distribution only).



***Todd McFarlane's Spawn,* the home video, features extended "director's cuts" not included in the TV series. © HBO Video.**

Warner Digs Into Library For X-Mas Video Line. *Warner Home Video is planning to release a huge collection of Christmas-themed home videos in September. . Of the 29 videos in the line, more than half are animated or contain animated segments. All of the material is being culled from the massive Time-Warner library of shorts, television shows and specials. Expanded in last year's Time-Warner/Turner merger, includes characters such as Scooby Doo and Fred Flintstone in the same family as Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny . Among the titles in the line are: A Flintstone Christmas, Flintstone's Christmas Carol, Christmas In Bedrock, A Pinky & The Brain Christmas, It's A Wonderful Tiny Toons Christmas Special, A Nutcracker Scoob, Animaniacs: Helloo, Holidays, Ace Ventura the Reindeer Hunter, Daffy Duck's Thanks For Giving, Rudolph and Frosty's Christmas in July, Bugs Bunny's Thanksgiving Diet, Looney Christmas Tales and Frosty's Winter Wonderland, among others. Ranging in price from $9.95 to $14.95, the whole collection will become available on September 30, a full 84 shopping days before Christmas!*

J.J. Sedelmaier's *Larry the Luger.*

***Spawn* Lands On Video.** *Spawn seems to be everywhere these days...Todd McFarlane's franchise has been exploited in a comic book (90 million sold), a toy line, a feature film, video games, an animated series, and now, on home video, in Todd McFarlane's Spawn, a 147 minute video available in stores staring August 5. A collection of "director's cuts" from HBO Animation's animated series is being sold as a $22.97 Collector's Edition for mature audiences, while a PG-13 version which ties in with the toy line is available for $19.94. To promote the August 5 video release, McFarlane will be making appearances and doing a book-signings. McFarlane's company, TMP Inc., is also participating in "The Warped Tour," a 29-city U.S. extreme sports and alternative music event.*

Manga To Release First Korean Title. *Manga Entertainment, distributor of Japanese anime (and soon to be distributor of animated shorts!), will release Armageddon, its first Korean anime release, on home video September 23. Created by director/producer Hyunse Lee and Daewoo Electronics, Armageddon features a style and*

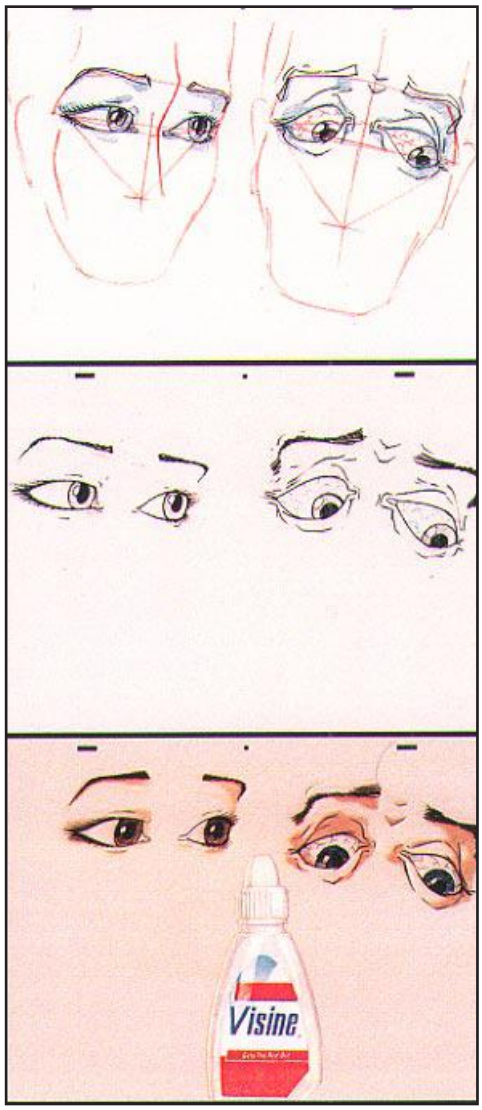
action storyline similar to much of the Japanese anime films. The 90 minute Armageddon will be available exclusively in an English dubbed version, for $19.95.

Commercials

Spotlight

J.J. Sedelmaier Productions *created Larry the Luger, their fifth commercial for Goodmark's Slim Jim snacks "extreme sports" themed campaign. The 30 second spot was animated by Tom Warburton in a rough, black and white style that looks like scratch-on-film, but was created with traditional drawings composited on a computer by* **Tape House Computer Ink And Paint.** *While this one was completed digitally, the first four spots in this campaign, produced by J.J. Sedelmaier, were 15 seconds each and created strictly on film…* **The Ink Tank** *in New York has expanded its production facility to include an additional 650 square feet of space. . . .***Curious Pictures'** *New York facility and staff director Steve Oakes created a 30 second commercial for Oscar Mayer's Lunchables snack product, through the J. Walter Thompson Agency in Chicago. The 3D computer animated spot, entitled High Noon, depicts a brown paper bag lunch and a Lunchables box pitted against each other in an "old western" style set-up. High Noon is airing in a few U.S. spot markets now, and will start airing nationwide in early 1998…***Curious Pictures** *also created Rubio 1 and Rubio 2, a pair of 30 second spots for the Southern California restaurant chain, Rubios. Directed by Steve Oakes, the spot features match sticks, dancing Busby Berkeley-style, animated using a combination of stop motion, tabletop photography and motion control camera work. The agency was VitroRoberston in San Diego… In yet another project,* **Curious Pictures,** *in collaboration with* **Tomato,** *the London-based artists' collective, created a 15 second I.D. spot for Island Records, which will be used on the company's videos and marketing materials….***Viewpoint Studios,** *a Boston-based broadcast design and animation studio, created the title animation sequence and internal graphics for Science Times, a new television series inspired by The New York Times' science news column, and produced by NyT Television, Pearson Television and The Learning Channel…***Blue Sky** *completed the second in a series of commercials for Rayovac, following their pilot CGI spot featuring appliances lining up to be filled with batteries. The new 30 second spot, titled Fierce Creatures, stars campaign spokesman Michael Jordan interacting with a CGI "battery-eating" CD Player…Portland-based* **Will Vinton Studios** *created Metal Test, a commercial for Clorox Bleach, through the DDB Needham agency. Directed by Barry Bruce, the 30 second spot uses 3-D computer generated character animation to depict anthropomorphic bottles of bleach attempting to pass themselves off as Clorox brand… San Francisco-based* **Luna Cie, Inc.** *recently created animated segments and effects for two animated music videos. For the band Primus and their song, "Shake Hands With Beef," Luna Cie director/president John Tissavary animated bluescreened CGI wings for live-action characters. For The Charlie Hunter Quartet's song,*

Will Vinton Studio's *Clorox Metal Test.*



***Talking Eyes*, a visine commercial by Zander's Animation Parlour.**

"Lively Up Yourself," Tissavary created the entire video using grainy Super-8 film composited with computer effects. Both spots utilized Alias Wavefront's PowerAnimator on a Silicon Graphics Indigo2 Extreme workstation… **Loconte Goldman Design** *created a package of I.D.s, bumpers and motion backgrounds for ABC News' program, Nightline. The spots, featuring animated moving typography, and multi-layered imagery, were created using a variety of techniques including SGI-rendered lighting effects…Portland-based* **Will Vinton Studios** *created Drum Solo, a commercial for BBDO/NY's client's product Doritos Nacho Cheesier. This is the second Doritos commercial created by Vinton in a campaign promoting the snack food as "The Loudest Taste On Earth." The 15 second spot was created using experimental techniques described by director David Daniels as "carefully calculated nonchalance," starting with deliberately scratching live-action film, scanning the images frame-by-frame into a computer, then printing, coloring, texturizing and ultimately re-shooting each frame on film… Los Angeles-based* **REZN8 Productions** *designed an on-air image campaign for Fox Broadcasting Company, promoting the network's daily programming line-ups with a combination of live action, effects and animation…New York's* **Zander's Animation Parlour** *completed Talking Eyes, two commercials for Partner's & Shevacks' client, Pfizer, the manufacturer of Visine eye drops. The hand-animated, 15 and 30 second spots depict two simple yet realistically-animated pairs of human eyes, one of them, of course, in bloodshot condition.*

Telezign Goes Bicoastal. *Telezign, the ten-year-old New York-based graphics, design and animation studio, recently "went bicoastal" by opening a Los Angeles studio in Santa Monica. The new facility, which has already aided the completion of several productions, is being headed up by Jean Shim as creative director and Peter Burega as managing director. Both Shim and Burega joined the company this year. Telezign, which has produced many broadcast i.d. promotional packages for television networks, hopes the expansion to L.A. will add more motion picture work to the company's credit list. Most recently, Telezign has created promos for the TV shows The Keenen Ivory Wayans Show, Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy!*

Kleiser-Walczak Launches Commercial Division. *Kleiser-Walczak Construction Company, a visual effects firm with offices in North Adams, Massachusetts and Hollywood, has launched a studio in New York focused on commercial production. Headed by partners Jeff Kleiser and Diana Walczak, the company has primarily focused on digital production for feature film and theme park projects, such as Judge Dredd, Stargate, and currently, New Line Cinema's Mortal Combat: Annihilation. The New York studio is already in production on a commercial for Griffin Bacall's toy line based on the Beast Wars animated series by Mainframe Entertainment. Animators Ray Haleblian and Josh Reisf have relocated to New York from the Massachusetts facility, and Kleiser Walczak anticipates several new hires as well. New York-based commercial rep Alan Brown will continue to be the New York representative.*

Interactive & Internet

Quick Bytes

Broderbund Software's Living Books is releasing an updated version of their award-winning 1992 Just Grandma and Me, an "interactive storybook" CD-ROM for kids ages 3-7. The title is available for retail $30 on Windows and Macintosh. . . . . Broderbund also recently released three new Carmen Sandiego game titles: Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?, Carmen Sandiego World Detective and Carmen Sandiego Math Detective. All titles are available on Windows and Macintosh formats for approximately $35-$40 each. . . . . Watertown, Massachusetts-based FableVision Animation Studios created animation for Dr. Jane Goodall: Animals and Environments, an educational CD-ROM published by Tom Snyder Productions. The title highlights the work of chimpanzee researcher Dr. Jane Goodall.

Education

L.A. Learning Tree Grows Animation. *The Learning Tree University (LTU), a private educational program run in Chatsworth and Thousand Oaks, California, is offering a new program in animation. Fourteen topic-specific courses are being offered, covering the basics of animation production, from Storyboarding, Character Development, Background Painting, Layout and Inbetweening, as well as one course in computer animation with 3D StudioMax software. Faculty include employees at Columbia TriStar, Disney Consumer Products, Hanna-Barbera, Film Roman and Walt Disney Feature*

Animation. In addition, LTU offers courses in Life Drawing, Caricatures, and Computer Graphics. The program is intended for aspiring animators and professionals seeking to update their skills, with evening and weekend classes which can be transferred for college credit.
For information, visit http://www.ltu.org

IAAPA's Intern Program. *The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) is sponsoring an intern placement program in cooperation with the George Washington University Event Management Program. The program will help place qualified college students from universities nationwide into unpaid positions at any of the nearly 5,000 IAAPA member companies, such as ridefilm creators Rhythm & Hues or Iwerks Entertainment. For information, visit http://www.iaapa.org*

Technology

See: SIGGRAPH News Report *in this issue.*

Events

In addition to our announcements in the weekly Animation Flash, you'll always find frequently updated information and links for festivals and events worldwide, in Animation World Network's Calendar of Events section, at http://www.awn.com/awneng/village/calendar.html

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SD Film Fest Call For Entries. *The 13th annual San Diego Film Fest, slated for February 1997, is now accepting submissions for its animated film category. This is the second year that the festival has hosted a separate animation program, in which all of the animated films in competition are screened together. A trophy and a cash prize is planned for the animation category, while a $1,000 cash prize is confirmed for the best short film. The winning film will be selected by a secret jury comprised of critics, professors and graduate students from the San Diego film community. The entry fee is $20.00 and all films must be submitted on video cassette for a deadline of November 30. For entry forms and regulations, visit http://ueo.ucsd.edu or email rbialy@ucsd.edu*

Honolulu Underground Fest Call For Entries. *Aloha! The third annual Honolulu Underground Film Festival (HUFF), slated to take place November 16-23 in Hawaii, is now accepting film and video entries for its international competition. Competition categories include 2D Animation, 3D Animation, Documentary, Comedy, Horror, Drama, Action, Adventure, Shorts and Features. Cash prizes range from $200 to $500. The entry deadline is September 15, and the fee is $20 per film. For information, visit http://www.lava.net/huff after August 10.*

Worldfest-Charleston Call For Entries. *The Worldfest-Charleston International Film and Video Festival is now accepting entries for its fifth annual competitive festival in Charleston, South Carolina, November 1-9, 1997. Five out of ten competition categories include animation sub-categories: Theatrical Feature Films, Television and Video Production, Short Subjects-Films and Videos, TV Commercials and PSAs and Experimental Films and Videos. Entry fees range from $50 to $100. For entry forms and information, visit http://www.vannevar.com/worldfest*

IAAPA Trade Show. *The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) will host its' 79th annual Convention and Trade Show, dubbed "The Magic of Fun." Known as the largest convention for professionals in the amusement and attractions field, the event is scheduled to take place November 18-22 in Orlando, Florida. Organizers expect more than 1,000 exhibitors and over 23,000 attendees. For information, visit http://www.iaapa.org*

Unicef Animation Art Auction. *UNICEF and Sotheby's Collectibles in New York City will hold an animation art auction in mid-December, with proceeds to benefit UNICEF's Cartoons For Children's Rights Animation Campaign. UNICEF is currently seeking donations of feature film and television series animation artwork; all donations are tax deductible. Companies which have already donated artwork include Walt Disney Feature Animation, Warner Bros. Feature Animation, MTV Animation, HBO Animation and Fred Wolf Films. To make a donation, or for additional information about the auction, contact Deborah Reber [dreber@unicef.org] or Lynn Klugman [lklugman@unicefo.org]. For information on UNICEF's activities in animation, visit the official UNICEF web site on Animation World Network.*
http://www.awn.com/unicef

Celebration Of Independent Video. *LA Freewaves kicked off its fifth Celebration of Independent Video Etc. in Los Angeles last weekend, with more than 15 screenings, courses and presentations of video*

and media which took place throughout the Los Angeles area. The programs will now be traveling to 13 different locations in Southern California. In addition to the Celebration, the Museum of Contemporary Art in downtown Los Angeles is hosting a new media exhibition called Private TV, Public Living Rooms, August 29-September 30. Make the trip, because this facet of the Celebration won't be hitting the road. For information on these events, visit http://pixels.filmtv.ucla.edu/community/LA_Freewaves

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Small Press Expo. *The Eastern U.S.' annual independent comic book publishing event, the Small Press Expo, is scheduled for September 19-21, in Silver Spring, Maryland, with a follow-up signing tour taking place throughout the month. Many comic artists will be present at the "mini Comic Con," and in the tour, including Shannon Wheeler, creator of Too Much Coffee Man. An anthology featuring the work of more than 40 comic artists, titled SPX Comic, will be distributed before and during the Expo, with all profits going to support the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF). For information on the Small Press Expo, visit http://www.indyworld.com /spx97*

Digital Video Conference. *Miller Freeman, the San Francisco-based organizers of many technology, graphics and digital media events, is presenting The Digital Video Conference & Exposition, October 20-23 in Burbank, California. The exposition will feature exhibitors of hardware, software and services, while the conference will present technically-focused seminars for professionals using or learning about digital video technology. Seminar topics include 3-D animation & compositing, special effects and new delivery technologies.*

Student Festival A Class Act. *The International Student Animation Festival of Ottawa, otherwise known as SAFO, has released the schedule of programs and screenings for the September 18-21 event in Ottawa, Canada. Only in its first year, the festival selection committee has received over 600 entries from student filmmakers in 25 countries, more than half the number of films received by large, established festivals such as Annecy. Festival director Chris Robinson said that the response "suggests that perhaps animation festivals, most of which are biennial, may need to consider focusing on an annual program of events to accommodate the sheer number of works being created." Several panels and workshops are being offered for students, on subjects such as preparing a portfolio, setting up your own studio, and negotiating licensing contracts. In addition, SAFO has programmed an interesting selection of retrospective screenings, including tributes to Corky Quackenbush and J.J. Sedelmaier; "First Cracks," a program of first films by the likes of Mike Judge, Tim Burton, and Paul Driessen; "Animation Grooves," a show of musical animation; and "Cartoons and the Movies," programmed by Jayne Pilling, which looks at the relationship between live-action cinema and animation, their interaction and mutual influence over the century. The first festival devoted to student and first time animators, SAFO is being presented by the organizers of the Ottawa International Animation Festival, which has taken place in Ottawa for over 20 years. For information, visit the SAFO web site in AWN's Animation Village, http://www.awn.com/safo*

Awards

Kurtz & Friends Win Peabody. *Burbank, California-based Kurtz & Friends recently received a prestigious Peabody Award recognizing "distinguished achievement and meritorious public service" for their 1996 animated television special, Edith Ann's Christmas: Just Say Noel. The half-hour special, produced with Lily Tomlin (who voices the character) and Jane Wagner, aired on ABC in December 1996. Selected by a jury out of more than 1,000 entries, Edith Ann was noted by the Peabody committee for having an "alternative perspective," in its "emotionally complex" depiction of a dysfunctional family. Diane Sawyer was master of ceremonies at the 56th annual awards presentation in New York. The first "Edith Ann" special was animated by Klasky Csupo in Hollywood, in 1993.*

AnimExpo. *The first edition of AnimExpo in Korea took place last month. Check out the full review and list of winners in this issue.*

Animation World News is compiled daily for publication in the AWN Daily Flash, the weekly Animation Flash email newsletter, and monthly issues of Animation World Magazine.

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DESERT ISLAND SERIES

On A Desert Island With . . . TV Visionaries

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

Are there televisions on desert islands? Just in case, we asked some of the most creative, creatives in television animation to pick their top ten films to take with them if they were stranded on a desert island. Coincidentally, with seven picks on the list being comic adaptations, and two of our guests currently working on television series based on comic book properties, this episode of the Desert Island Series doubles as proof positive of the influence the comic world has on television animation.

Martin Lickleder *is responsible for the creative development of ProSieben's animation co-productions. With the help of various international partners, he is currently helping to develop animation programs such as Loggerheads, Space Goofs (Home to Rent) and Ned's Newt.*

Trey Parker *and* **Matt Stone** *are the co-creators of Comedy Central's new prime time animated series, South Park. Some of you may also remember their animated short, The Spirit of Christmas, which became the underground cult hit of the animation industry last year. Maybe now we can explain where they get their sense of humor, with several live-action comedies making their lists.*

Steve Purcell *first created Sam & Max Freelance Police as a comic book. The comics were adapted in 1993 for a CD-Rom game from LucasArts called Sam & Max Hit the Road. Now Sam & Max is an animated series from Nelvana, premiering this fall on the Fox Children's Network.*

Enzo d'Alo *is an acclaimed Italian director who has made his mark directing animated feature films such as La Freccia Azzura (The Blue Arrow). He recently directed 26 fifteen minute episodes of La Pimpa, an animated television series for RAI, based on the Altan comic strip. We caught up with Enzo while he was vacationing on the Italian island of Sardinia, mentally gearing up for his next feature film, The History of the Little Seagull, scheduled for a Christmas 1998 release. While Sardinia may not be a desert island by most definitions, Enzo had no trouble coming up with the top ten films he'd like to have with him!*

Martin Lickleder's top ten list:

1. *The Watchmen* by Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons.
2. *Tintin* by Hergé.
3. *Why I Hate Saturn* by Kyle Baker.
4. *Corto Maltese* by Hugo Pratt.
5. *Asterix* by Goscinny & Uderzo.
6. *Little Nemo In Slumberland* by Winsor McCay.
7. *Some Stories* by German artist Walter Moers.
8. *Les Frustrés* by Claire Bretécher.
9. *Love & Rockets* by Bros. Hernandez.

The *Loggerheads* series, for which Martin Lickleder worked on development. © Pro Sieben.

Trey Parker's favorites:

1. *A Christmas Story.*
2. *Life of Brian.*
3. *Outlaw Josey Wales.*
4. *The Bad Seed.*
5. *Camp Jabberwocky '96.*
6. *This is Spinal Tap.*
7. *The Empire Strikes Back.*
8. *Babe.*
9. *Sorority Sex Kittens III.*
10. *Excalibur.*

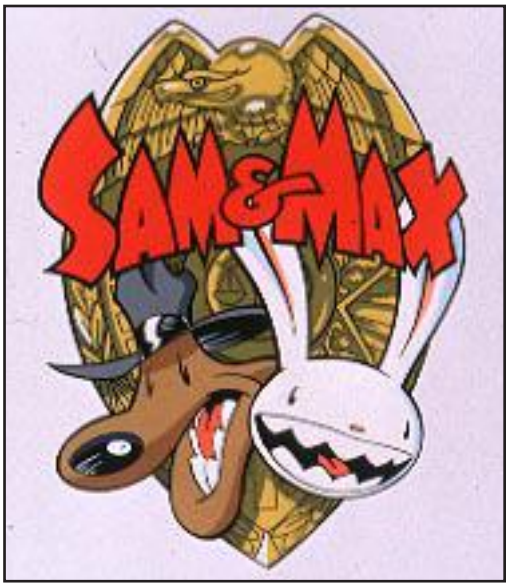
Matt Stone's picks:

1. *Rocky.*
2. *Rocky II.*
3. *Rocky III.*
4. *Rocky IV.*
5. *Rocky V.*
6. *Raising Arizona.*
7. *Babe.*
8. *Camp Jabberwocky '97.*
9. *Megaforce.*
10. *Withnail and I.*

***South Park*, created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone.**
© Comedy Central.

Enzo D'Alo's program:

1. *Manipulation* by Daniel Greaves.
2. All Norman McLaren films, especially *Blinkety Blank.*
3. *Allegro Non Troppo* by Bruno Bozzetto.
4. *The Big Snit* by Richard Condie.
5. *A Close Shave* by Nick Park.
6. *La Gazza Ladra (The Theiving Magpie)* by Giulio Gianini and Emanuele Luzzati.
7. *Bob's Birthday* by Alison Snowden and David Fine.
8. *Crac!* by Frederic Back.
9. *The Little Wolf* by An Vrombaut.
10. All Tex Avery cartoons, especially *Swing Shift Cinderella.*



Steve Purcell's selections:

1. *The Nightmare Before Christmas* from Disney/Henry Selick.
2. *Feed the Kitty.*
3. *Bambi* from Disney.
4. *Rabbit of Seville* from Warner Bros.
5. *Beauty and the Beast* from Disney.
6. *Yellow Submarine* by George Dunning.
7. *Pinnochio* from Disney.
8. *The Wrong Trousers* by Nick Park.
9. *Man's Best Friend.*
10. *Akira* by Katsuhiro Otamo.

AWN Comics

The Dirdy Birdy by John R. Dilworth

Animation World Magazine 1997 Calendar

Licensing and Merchandising, October 1997

This month we will take a look at a field that is constantly growing in importance - Licensing and Merchandising. Entertainment promotions expert Jennifer Deare will tell us about building strategic promotions while Teresa A. Klein will outline the benefits and drawbacks of the new wave of "studio stores" vs. the good, ol' fashioned nationwide chain. Tom Tumbufch will lead us down memory lane with an in-depth account of Disney's first product lines, while Karen Raugust will detail Japan's current merchandising trends. UNICEF's soon to be launched Meena line in South Asia will also be examined. We will also feature London's Museum of the Moving Image in our "Hidden Treasures" column and hear one of animation's hottest agents, John Goldsmith, describe why young up-and-comers need his services.

In addition, we will unveil two new features! AWM will now present a monthly film review. Get a jump on the festival selection committees and check it out! We are adding a monthly online chat with a special guest as well. Throughout the month of October, Jennifer Deare will answer all of your questions regarding the strategic promotion of licensing, merchandising and your project.

Animation World Magazine 1997 Calendar

Licensing & Merchandising	*(October)*
Home Video and Animation Art	*(November)*
Gaming! The World of Interactive Animation	*(December)*

world TRADE centre

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Reed Exhibition Companies
Delivering Business Contacts

MIPCOM Junior
Youth Programming Screenings
24-25 September 1997 · Hotel Martinez, Cannes, France

MIPCOM
International Film & Programme Market
for TV, Video, Cable & Satellite
26-30 September 1997
Palais des Festivals, Cannes, France

MIPASIA
International Film & Programme Market
for TV, Video, Cable, Satellite, Licensing & Merchandising
4-6 December 1997
Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong

mipdoc
Documentary Screenings
1-2 April 1998 · Hotel Martinez, Cannes, France

MIP 98
International Television Programme Market
3-8 April 1998 · Palais des Festivals, Cannes, France

210 x 297